

# SELECT POEMS

1808

COLERIDGE  
WORDSWORTH

EDITED BY  
W. J. ALEXANDER.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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*A. S. P. Hawthorne*

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# SELECT POEMS

FROM

*COLERIDGE AND WORDSWORTH*

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PRESCRIBED FOR UNIVERSITY AND NORMAL SCHOOL  
ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS.

1909.

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EDITED WITH

*INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND APPENDIX.*

BY

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## INTRODUCTION.

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF "THE ANCIENT MARINER."

**Difficulties in Appreciating the Poem.**—Those critics who assign the highest place to the poetic work of Coleridge, are wont to confess exceptional difficulty in making an analysis of the factors in his poetry which give rise to their admiration and a basis to their judgment. For example, Mr. Swinburne writes: "Of his best verses I venture to affirm that the world has nothing like them and can never have; that they are of the highest kind and of their own. . . . Of his flight and song when in the fit element, it is hard to speak at all, hopeless to speak adequately. It is natural that there should be nothing like them discoverable in any human work; natural that his poetry at its highest should be, as it is, beyond all praise and all words of men. He who could define it aright could 'unweave a rainbow,' he who could praise it aright would be such another as the poet." Yet in the case of *The Ancient Mariner* at least, some detailed account of its poetic effectiveness is eminently desirable, since from its first publication there has been a disposition among the critics, while admitting its many beauties, to find it falling short of the standard of the highest poetic worth,—sometimes because of its alleged lack of truth and good sense, sometimes because of its incoherence, sometimes for its want of moral significance, sometimes, on the contrary, because its imaginative excellence has been sacrificed to moral sentiments.\* And at the present day, though the general verdict of the most competent judges has indisputably been given in favour of the poem, the ordinary reader who does not at once submit to its charm, is apt to be full of objections and

\* Within a month of its publication Southey, speaking anonymously in the *Critical Review*, says of *The Ancient Mariner*: "Many of the stanzas are laboriously beautiful, but in connection they are absurd and unintelligible . . . . We do not sufficiently understand the story to analyse it. It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity. Genius has here been employed in producing a poem of little merit." And a few months later, the *Monthly Review* styles it "the strangest story of a cock and bull that we ever saw on paper . . . it seems a rhapsody of unintelligible wildness and incoherence . . . there are however in it poetical touches of an exquisite kind."

of questions ;\* whilst the defender finds his task of accounting for his enthusiasm, much less easy than it would be in the case of a play of Shakespeare or, indeed, of almost any other work which has given to its writer a high place among English poets. The chief cause of all this lies in the fact that *The Ancient Mariner* appeals so exclusively to the aesthetic sense, and so little either to the intellect or to normal human sympathies.† The perception of truth, of the successful representation of life and character, and the understanding and feeling for human joys and sorrows are developed by every-day experience ; whereas the lack of such inevitable education of the sense for artistic beauty makes the power of appreciating it the rarer. A sagacious mind little open to poetic effects may find much to interest and to excite admiration in the dramas of Shakespeare, as he who has no sense for beauty of form and colour, may appreciate the truth of a portrait ; whilst on the one hand, knowledge of the world and clearness of intellect are of no avail in such an art as music, where there is no appeal except to the sense of beauty of sound and its combinations. Poetry, unlike music, deals not with sounds merely, but with language, which is necessarily the expression of thought. Hence in poetry we may find what appeals to common sense :—truth, the

\* To the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth appended an apologetic note on *The Ancient Mariner*, which is interesting as showing the limitation of Wordsworth's poetic taste and as enumerating some objections which may be taken against the poem : "I cannot refuse myself the gratification of informing such Readers as may have been pleased with this Poem, or with any part of it, that they owe their pleasure in some sort to me ; as the Author was himself very desirous that it should be suppressed. This wish had arisen from a consciousness of the defects of the Poem, and from a knowledge that many persons had been much displeased with it. The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects ; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner or as a human being who having been long under the control of supernatural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural ; secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon ; thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other ; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated. Yet the Poem contains many delicate touches of passion, and indeed the passion is everywhere true to nature ; a great number of the stanzas present beautiful images and are expressed with unusual felicity of language, and the versification, though the metre is itself unfitted for long poems, is harmonious and artfully varied, exhibiting the utmost powers of that metre, and every variety of which it is capable."

† "It would need Coleridge the critic to discover the secrets of the genius of Coleridge the poet. To solve intellectual puzzles in verse, to condense a diffused body of doctrine, to interpret what is called a poet's criticism of life is after all not difficult ; but to find expressions in the language of thought corresponding to pure melody and imaginative loveliness is a finer exercise of wit." (*Dowden's Coleridge as a Poet.*)

criticism of life, the facts of human nature ; yet valuable as these are, and largely as they may contribute to our pleasure, they are not themselves necessarily poetical, and cannot of themselves give poetic excellence to the work which contains them. Or again, poetry may be great because it profoundly stirs our sympathies ; but then it must deal with what comes within the range of familiar experience. Now, the theme of *The Ancient Mariner* is like the theme of a fairy tale,—so remote in its incidents from reality, that it appeals but little to our sense of truth, and cannot intensely excite our emotional nature. Hence to those who lack the special ear for the essentially poetical, this poem is likely to seem trivial ; whilst those, who spite of the little value they are disposed consciously to put upon artistic charm, are yet captivated by the beauty of this poem, often seek to justify their preference by alleging the existence of an allegorical meaning or a moral lesson.\* Such attempts to force a deeper significance upon *The Ancient Mariner*, are really destructive of its main strength, which is æsthetic, and lies in its artistic consistency and unity—in its perfect harmony, beauty and completeness, if regarded from its own point of view. To enjoy it we must follow Coleridge's own critical method :—take it for what, on the face of it, it is ; and not mar our satisfaction and its beauty by attempting to thrust it into a sphere (even if that be a higher one) to which it does not properly belong.

**Its Fundamental Character.**—“*The Ancient Mariner*,” says Pater, “is a ‘romantic’ poem, impressing us by bold invention, and appealing to that taste for the supernatural, that longing for a *shudder*, to which the romantic school in Germany, and its derivatives in France and England, directly ministered.” Fundamentally, then, this poem is a story addressed to the universal taste for the marvellous and weird, strongest in children and in the primitive stages of society, yet inherent, though it may be overlaid, in more mature minds and more enlightened ages. At the date of its composition, there was an extra-

\* In his *Table Talk* Coleridge is reported as saying: “Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired *The Ancient Mariner* very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that might admit some question ; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much ; and that the only or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo ! a genii starts up, and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant, *because* one of the date-shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genii's son.” (*Table Talk*, May 31, 1830.)

ordinary revival of the appetite for the supernatural ; and *The Ancient Mariner*, far from being exceptional as regards its theme, is another example of the fact that a great masterpiece is never an isolated phenomenon, but the outcome of favouring circumstances in the times, as well as of exceptional gifts in its creator

**Antecedent Conditions.**—The explanation of the flourishing of the supernatural at so late and so “illuminated” a period as the latter half of the Eighteenth century, lies mainly in the principle of reaction. At successive epochs in the history of a race or a community, various tendencies or principles become predominant which give a direction to the whole mental activity of the time, are likely to be carried to excess, and hence to involve the temporary checking of equally natural tendencies in other directions. In course of time, these latter, in turn, are wont to reassert themselves ; and with the greater emphasis, the longer and more successfully they have been repressed. A familiar example is the revolt against the strained asceticism of Puritanism, as exhibited in the excesses of society during the reign of Charles II. Now, it is a very manifest and familiar fact to students of English literature, that during a period extending, roughly speaking, from the Restoration to the death of Pope (1660-1744), there was a marked predilection, in the world of thought and literature, for ideas, principles and themes that were congenial to the purely logical thinking faculty, at the expense of all that addressed itself to the heart and imagination. We might instance, for example, the sphere of religion : the main stress during this period was laid upon the moral code of Christianity, the manifest utility of which for the well-being of the individual and of society was patent to common sense ; whereas the more mystical and emotional side—the sense of the hatefulness of sin, of intimate personal relations with the Founder of Christianity, or with the Creator, and other states of feeling which have always been in the ascendant during periods of religious quickening—were but little felt or valued. Indeed enthusiasm and fervour were under the ban in the most approved orthodox circles. The theological literature of the same date was busied with showing the reasonableness of Christianity, reducing the supernatural to the smallest possible limits, and demonstrating that Christian teachings are exactly those which would have been attained, without supernatural revelation, on a candid view of the universe by a sensible man. The reaction against this dry intellectualism was earliest and most clearly apparent in the Methodist development towards the close of the first half of the Eighteenth century. Here religious conviction was not

based upon arguments addressed to universal reason, but upon an appeal to a personal experience,—the sense of sin, of pardon, and so forth. Such a preacher as Whitfield sought to reach the heart rather than the reason; and the progress of the movement was marked, in the case both of individuals and of large collections of men, by extraordinary emotional phenomena. A similar revolution from the explicable and intellectual towards the mysterious and emotional took place at approximately the same era in all possible spheres; even, for example, in landscape gardening, where the formal and prim Dutch system with its straight paths, clipped shrubbery and artificial water-courses, was superseded by an attempt to reproduce the variety, complexity, and irregularity of nature,—to a fashion, accordingly, which stimulated the imagination through mystery and unexpectedness. In literature, the rational period is best typified in the poetry of Pope, dealing, as it does, most successfully and frequently, either with abstract truths—generalizations of experience which interest the cultivated intellect; or with satiric pictures of contemporary society, which, as is inevitable with satire, appeal to the reader's judgment of what is proper and congruous, rather than rouses emotion through sympathy with the persons and situations presented. The style, too, in keeping with the theme, does not so much aim at charming the sensuous perception and at stimulating the feeling by the richness, complexity and fitness of its music, as at gratifying the judgment by the rhetorical force and aptness with which each point is expressed.

The reaction towards the emotional and imaginative naturally had its excessive and morbid sides. In the first place, there is the bent towards Sentimentalism, the indulgence in emotion without adequate grounds and on every occasion. The most conspicuous examples of the literature of Sentimentalism are to be found outside of England (for the movement of which we are speaking was not insular but European) in the writings of Rousseau and in Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*. In England, Sterne's works exhibit the same tendency, and traces of it are very widely perceptible, for instance in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. In the second place, there existed a craving for the more unusual, pungent, and violent stimulants to feeling. Something of this was manifest in the marked fashion for "grave-yard" poetry, which had so noble an outcome in Gray's *Elegy*; but the taste was more particularly shown in the predilection for the marvellous and horrible, the mysterious and supernatural—for themes which would have been stigmatized as childish and trivial by the sensible men of the world whose

F. L. 10

preferences gave law to literature in the days of Anne and George I. Hence it is that English fiction, which in the hands of DeFoe, Richardson and Fielding had hitherto been realistic, began to develop the novel of wonder and romance. Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1765), M. G. Lewis's *Monk* (1796) *Castle Spectre* and *Tales of Wonder*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and other novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, and many episodes in Scott's poetry and prose are all the outcome of the prevalent fashion. The Ancient Mariner is, therefore, not an isolated product; but, among many attempts, the supremely successful embodiment of a certain sort of interest which is native to the human heart, and which, at this particular date, had gained greater ascendancy than at any era since the dawn of the critical spirit. It treats the weirdly supernatural in a spirit suited to modern taste.

**General Conception.**—By what means, we may next inquire, is Coleridge successful in giving for a modern reader, the highest pleasure compatible with such a theme? The task was not an easy one; the generation for which he wrote, like our own, was wholly sceptical as to the existence of such supernatural agents and events as are represented in the poem, however ready to yield them, for the purposes of imaginative enjoyment, a temporary belief. Hence the handling of the subject was necessarily a matter of extreme delicacy and tact,—a very different task from the treatment which might have sufficed for a credulous mediæval audience. The artist must throw an atmosphere about his story which may help his readers to see its events in a different light from that in which they regard the possible occurrences of actual life; he must, in as far as possible, remove all impediments to poetic faith, and prevent all unpleasant collisions between the fancies which he conjures up, and the hard facts of real experience. To attain this end, Coleridge, in the first place, adopts, for the setting of the story, certain devices, usual and sufficiently obvious but executed with rare skill. As to time, he thrusts his scene back into an undefined period of the past where vagueness and remoteness make the extraordinary more credible; and, as to place, into a region real indeed and permitting real description, but almost unknown and wholly unfamiliar.\* For similar

\* "Any one examining the poem with a critical eye for its machinery and groundwork will have noticed that Coleridge is careful not to introduce any element of the marvellous or supernatural until he has transported the reader beyond the pale of definite geographical knowledge, and then left behind him all those conditions of the known and the familiar, all those associations with recorded fact and experience, which would have created an inimical atmosphere. . . . In some half-dozen stanzas beginning with 'The ship was cleared,' we find ourselves crossing the line and o-

(3) reasons, the author withdraws himself as far as possible from notice ; he constructs a narrative within a narrative, told by the hero himself. Of the frame thus afforded to the main story, the poet makes the happiest use ; the reality of the experiences is, as it were, attested by the impression produced upon the imaginary auditors ; and the suggestiveness of these references are far more potent over the imagination than any detailed description addressed directly to the reader. More important than these artifices is the general form into which the story is cast. The greater era of credulity and of the marvellous is the Middle Ages, and its literature and traditions afforded the chief storehouse for gratifying the new appetite for the romantic. It was this, among other things, that caused the marked revival of interest in earlier literature that characterized the century with which we are dealing. For Coleridge's contemporaries, such themes as that of *The Ancient Mariner* were associated with mediaeval forms. Hence, to lure his readers into the proper state of mind, he employs, not one of the literary modes of his own day, but the mediaeval ballad. The stanza, the phraseology, the quaint marginal commentary, the naivety and other peculiarities of treatment, serve to give the proper atmosphere, to make us feel we are in a sphere where the prosaic standards of our own time do not apply.\*

**Special Merits.**—These devices for giving imaginative plausibility to the story are very necessary factors in the success of the poem, but they are within the reach of a mediocre artist ; and apart from the pleasure we have in the perception of the successful imitation of the ballad, they are rather conditions requisite to the success of the poem, than themselves factors which actually produce enjoyment. It is upon more subtle and evasive qualities, often of course beyond the reach of analysis, that the specific beauty of the work depends. In the first place, for the treatment of a theme of this character, Coleridge has manifestly special qualification : the dreaminess and visionariness of his temperament, the love of mysticism which is manifest even in his philosophy, his confessed taste for "all the strange phantoms that

far beyond the Southern Pole. Beyond a few broad indications thus vouchsafed, Coleridge very astutely takes pains to avoid anything like geography. We reach that silent sea into which we are the first that ever burst, and that is sufficient for imaginative ends. It is enough that the world, as known to actual navigators, is left behind, and a world which the poet is free to colonize with the wildest children of his dreaming brain, has been entered. Thenceforward we cease to have any direct relations with the verifiable. Natural law is suspended : standards of probability have ceased to exist."

(William Watson, *Excursions in Criticism.*)

\* Cf. the device of the Minstrel in Scott's *Lay*.

ever possessed 'your philosophy' dreamers," and "his odd and out-of-the-way reading in the old-fashioned literature of the marvellous—books like Purchas's *Pilgrims*, early voyages like Hakluyt's, old naturalists and visionary moralists like Burnet." Then he was a psychologist, skilled in the subtler workings of the mind and is very successful in what he sets down\* as the main purpose of this poem :—"the exciting of the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature" so as to interest "the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany the situations of the poem, supposing them to be real." † It must be noted, too, that, however unreal the general situation may be, the feelings of the hero are, many of them, as much within the range of ordinary human sympathy as anything in literature. The poem belongs to the weird yet not wholly so ; and indeed in the edition of 1817, the crude horror and grotesqueness which were the outcome of a passing phase of fashion, are retrenched, and the author manifests a stronger confidence in the permanent elements of beauty and interest in his work. But, after all, it is not so much Coleridge the psychologist, or Coleridge the student of quaint and bygone literature, or even Coleridge the dreamer, as Coleridge the artist of the beautiful, that does most for the success of the poem. Note, first of all, the skill of his adaptation of the ballad form. The ballad, one of the most primitive and popular species of literature that survive, has marked characteristics that arose from the circumstances of its production. It was originally extemporized in the presence of an audience ; on subsequent occasions reproduced partly from memory, partly under the inspiration of new listeners and new conditions ; then transmitted from minstrel to minstrel, and reshaped by each. Thus there was finally evolved a composite product sometimes admirably fitted for immediate effect upon hearers who were neither subtle nor critical, but who did possess to the full all the fundamental and universal artistic capabilities of human nature. The ballad is, in consequence, stampel with marked excellences and very manifest defects. Coleridge reproduces the former, and even adapts the latter to his own purposes. In brevity and swiftness of development, his poem does not fall behind its model ; and the rapid transitions of the ballad proper are eminently suitable for a series of pictures which charm by their strangeness and

\* Pp. 93-4 below.

† Note, for example, how the sense of strained and anxious attention is communicated in ll. 149 fol. ; the effectiveness and truth of the representation of feeling in ll. 232-262, and in the simile at l. 446 ; and the natural touch of the yearning for homely repose at l. 601 fol.

# COLERIDGE.

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## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

---

“Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibles quam visibles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit, et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? Quae loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari; ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.”—T. BURNET, *Archæol. Phil.*, p. 68.

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### PART I.

An ancient  
Mariner meet-  
eth three Gal-  
lants bidden to  
a wedding-feast,  
and detaineth  
one.

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
“By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me?

“The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide, 5  
And I am next of kin;  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
May’st hear the merry din.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
“There was a ship,” quoth he. 10  
“Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!”  
Eftsoons his hand dropt he:

The Wedding-  
Guest is spell-  
bound by the  
eye of the old  
seafaring man,  
and constrained  
to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three years’ child: 15  
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :  
 He cannot choose but hear ;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner :—

20

“The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,  
 Merrily did we drop  
 Below the kirk, below the hill,  
 Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner  
 tells how the  
 ship sailed  
 southward with  
 a good wind and  
 fair weather, till  
 it reached the  
 line.

“The Sun came up upon the left,  
 Out of the sea came he !  
 And he shone bright, and on the right  
 Went down into the sea.

25

“Higher and higher every day,  
 Till over the mast at noon”—  
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

30

The Wedding-  
 Guest heareth  
 the bridal  
 music ; but the  
 Mariner con-  
 tinueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
 Red as a rose is she ;  
 Nodding their heads before her goes  
 The merry minstrelsy.

35

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
 Yet he cannot choose but hear ;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

The ship drawn  
 by a storm  
 towards the  
 south pole.

“And now the storm-blast came, and he  
 Was tyrannous and strong ;  
 He struck with his o'er-taking wings,  
 And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45  
 As who pursued with yell and blow  
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,  
 And forward bends his head,  
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
 And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,  
 And it grew wondrous cold :  
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
 As green as emerald.

The land of ice,  
 and of fearful sounds, where  
 no living thing  
 was to be seen. 55  
 And through the drifts, the snowy cliffs  
 Did send a dismal sheen .  
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—  
 The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
 The ice was all around : 60  
 It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
 Like noises in a swound !

Till a great sea-  
 bird, called the  
 Albatross, came  
 through the  
 snow-fog, and  
 was received  
 with great joy  
 and hospitality. 65  
 At length did cross an Albatross :  
 Thorough the fog it came ;  
 As if it had been a Christian soul,  
 We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
 And round and round it flew.  
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;  
 The helmsman steered us through ! 70

And lo ! the  
 Albatross  
 proveth a bird  
 of good omen,  
 and followeth  
 the ship as it  
 returned north-  
 ward through  
 fog and floating  
 ice. 75  
 And a good south wind sprung up behind ;  
 The Albatross did follow,  
 And every day, for food or play,  
 Came to the mariners' hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,  
It perched for vespers nine ;  
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
Glimmered the white moon-shine.”

75

The ancient  
Mariner inhosp-  
itably killeth  
the pious bird  
of good omen.

“ God save thee, ancient Mariner,  
From the fiends that plague thee thus !—  
Why look’st thou so ?”—“ With my cross-bow  
I shot the Albatross !”

80

## PART II.

The Sun now rose upon the right :  
Out of the sea came he,  
Still hid in mist, and on the left  
Went down into the sea.

85

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet bird did follow,  
Nor any day for food or play  
Came to the mariners’ hollo !

90

His shipmates  
cry out against  
the ancient  
Mariner, for  
killing the bird  
of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work ’em woe ;  
For all averred, I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow.  
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,  
That made the breeze to blow !

95

But when the  
fog cleared off  
they justify the  
same, and thus  
make them-  
selves accom-  
plices in the  
crime.

Nor dim, nor red, like God’s own head,  
The glorious Sun uprise :  
Then all averred, I had killed the bird  
That brought the fog and mist.  
’Twas right, said they, such birds to slay  
That bring the fog and mist.

100

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free;  
We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

105

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
'Twas sad as sad could be;  
And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea!

110

All in a hot and copper sky,  
The bloody Sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand,  
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

115

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,  
And all the boards did shrink; 120  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!  
That ever this should be!  
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
Upon the slimy sea.

125

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither

About, about, in reel and rout  
The death-fires danced at night;  
The water, like a witch's oils,  
Burnt green and blue and white.

130

departed souls  
nor angels ;  
concerning  
whom the  
learned Jew,  
Josephus, and  
the Platonic  
Constantinopo-  
litan, Michael  
Psellus, may be  
consulted.  
They are very  
numerous, and  
there is no cli-  
mate or element  
without one or  
more.

The shipmates,  
in their sore  
distress would  
fain throw the  
whole guilt on  
the ancient  
Mariner; in sign  
whereof they  
hang the dead  
sea-bird round  
his neck.

The ancient  
Mariner behold-  
eth a sign in the  
element afar off.

And some in dreams assured were  
Of the spirit that plagued us so ;  
Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135  
Was withered at the root ;  
We could not speak, no more than if  
We had been choked with soot.

Ah ! well a-day ! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young ! 140  
Instead of the Cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

## PART III.

There passed a weary time. Each throat  
Was parched, and glazed each eye.

A weary time ! a weary time ! 145  
How glazed each weary eye !

When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist : 150  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !  
And still it neared and neared :  
And as if it dodged a water-sprite, 155  
It plunged, and tacked, and veered.

At its nearer  
approach, it  
seemeth him to

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
We could nor laugh nor wail ;

be a ship ; and  
at a dear ran-  
son he freeth  
his speech from  
the bonds of  
thirst.

Through utter drought all dumb we stood !  
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,  
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

160

A flash of joy.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
Agape they heard me call :  
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,  
And all at once their breath drew in,  
As they were drinking all.

165

And horror fol-  
lows ; for can it  
be a ship that  
comes onward  
without wind  
or tide ?

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !  
Hither to work us weal ;  
Without a breeze, without a tide,  
She steadies with upright keel !

170

The western wave was all a-flame,  
The day was well-nigh done !  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright Sun ;  
When that strange shape drove su  
Betwixt us and the Sun.

175

It seemeth him  
but the skele-  
ton of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,  
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)  
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered  
With broad and burning face.

180

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)  
How fast she nears and nears !  
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,  
Like restless gossameres ?

And its ribs are  
seen as bars on  
the face of the  
setting sun.  
The spectre-  
woman and her

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun  
Did peer, as through a grate?  
And is that Woman all her crew?

185

death-mate,  
and no other  
on board the  
skeleton ship.  
Like vessel, like  
crew !

Is that a Death ? and are there two ?  
Is Death that woman's mate ?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold :  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thickens man's blood with cold.

190

Death and Life-  
in-Death have  
diced for the  
ship's crew, and  
she (the latter)  
winneth the  
ancient Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came,  
And the twain were casting dice ;  
“ The game is done ! I've won, I've won ! ”  
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

195

No twilight  
within the  
courts of the  
sun.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :  
At one stride comes the dark ;  
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,  
Off shot the spectre-bark.

200

At the rising of  
the moon.

We listened and looked sideways up !  
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
My life-blood seemed to sip !  
The stars were dim, and thick the night,  
The steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;  
From the sails the dew did drip —  
Till clomb above the eastern bar  
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star  
Within the nether tip.

205

210

One after  
another.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
Too quick for groan or sigh,  
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
And cursed me with his eye.

215

His shipmates  
drop down  
dead.

Four times fifty living men,  
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)  
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-  
Death begins  
her work on the  
ancient Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—  
They fled to bliss or woe !  
And every soul, it passed me by,  
Like the whizz of my cross-bow !

220

The Wedding-  
guest feareth  
that a spirit is  
talking to him.

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner !  
I fear thy skinny hand !  
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

225

But the ancient  
Mariner as-  
sureth him of  
his bodily life,  
and proceedeth  
to relate his  
horrible pen-  
ance.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,  
And thy skinny hand so brown.”—  
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !  
This body dropt not down.

230

Alone, alone, all all alone,  
Alone on a wide wide sea !  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.

235

He despiseth  
the creatures of  
the calm.

The many men, so beautiful !  
And they all dead did lie ;  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on ; and so did I.

And enviieth  
that they should  
live, and so  
many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,  
And drew my eyes away ;  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

240

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray  
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
 A wicked whisper came, and made  
 My heart as dry as dust.

245

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
 And the balls like pulses beat ;  
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky, 250  
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
 And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse  
 liveth for him  
 in the eye of  
 the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
 Nor rot nor reek did they :  
 The look with which they looked on me  
 Had never passed away.

255

An orphan's curse would drag to hell  
 A spirit from on high ;  
 But oh ! more horrible than that  
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye ! 260  
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
 And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness  
 and fixedness  
 he yearneth to-  
 wards the  
 journeying  
 moon, and the  
 stars that still  
 sojourn, yet still  
 move onward ;  
 and everywhere  
 the blue sky be-  
 longs to them,  
 and is their  
 appointed rest,  
 and their native  
 country and  
 their own  
 natural homes,  
 which they enter  
 unannounced,  
 as lords that are  
 certainly ex-  
 pected, and yet  
 there is a silent  
 joy at their  
 arrival.

The moving moon went up the sky,  
 And nowhere did abide ;  
 Softly she was going up,  
 And a star or two beside—

265

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,  
 Like April hoar-frost spread ;  
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
 The charmèd water burnt alway  
 A still and awful red.

270

By the light of  
the Moon he be-  
holdeth God's  
creatures of the  
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
I watched the water-snakes :  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared, the elfish light  
Fell off in hoary flakes.

275

Within the shadow of the ship  
I watched their rich attire :  
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam ; and every track  
Was a flash of golden fire.

280

Their beauty  
and their  
happiness.

O happy living things ! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare ;  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware !  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

285

He blesseth  
them in his  
heart.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off, and sank  
Like lead into the sea.

290

The spell begins  
to break.

## PART V.

O sleep ! it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole !  
To Mary Queen the praise be given !  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,  
That slid into my soul.

295

By grace of the  
holy Mother,  
the ancient  
Mariner is re-  
freshed with  
rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;  
And when I awoke, it rained.

300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank ;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs :  
I was so light—almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessed ghost.

305

And soon I heard a roaring wind :  
It did not come anear ;  
But with its sound it shook the sails,  
That were so thin and sere.

310

The upper air burst into life !  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,  
To and fro they were hurried about !  
And to and fro, and in and out,  
The wan stars danced between.

315

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;  
And the rain poured down from one black cloud :  
The moon was at its edge. 32

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
The moon was at its side :  
Like waters shot from some high crag,  
The lightning fell with never a jag,  
A river steep and wide.

325

The bodies of  
the ship's crew  
are inspirited,  
and the ship  
moves on :

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
Yet now the ship moved on!  
Beneath the lightning and the moon  
The dead men gave a groan.

330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;  
 It had been strange, even in a dream,  
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered ; the ship moved on ; 335.  
 Yet never a breeze up-blew ;  
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
 Where they were wont to do ;  
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
 We were a ghastly crew. 340

The body of my brother's son  
 Stood by me, knee to knee ;  
 The body and I pulled at one rope,  
 But he said nought to me.

but not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!" 345  
 Be calm thou Wedding-Guest !  
 "Twas not those souls that fled in pain,  
 Which to their corses came again,  
 But a troop of spirits blest :  
 For when it dawned—they dropped their arms, 350  
 And clustered round the mast ;  
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
 And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
 Then darted to the sun ; 355  
 Slowly the sounds came back again,  
 Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
 I heard the sky-lark sing ;  
 Sometimes all little birds that are, 360

How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,  
Now like a lonely flute ;  
And now it is an angel's song,  
That makes the heavens be mute.

365

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on  
A pleasant noise till noon,  
A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune.

370

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
Yet never a breeze did breathe ;  
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,  
Moved onward from beneath.

375

The lonesome spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
From the land of mist and snow,  
The spirit slid ; and it was he  
That made the ship to go.  
The sails at noon left off their tune,  
And the ship stood still also.

380

The sun, right up above the mast,  
Had fixed her to the ocean ;  
But in a minute she 'gan stir,  
With a short uneasy motion—  
Backwards and forwards half her length  
With a short uneasy motion.

385

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
She made a sudden bound :

390

It flung the blood into my head,  
And I fell down in a swound.

The Polar  
Spirit's fellow-  
demons, the in-  
visible inhabi-  
tants of the ele-  
ment, take part  
in his wrong ;  
and two of them  
relate, one to  
the other, that  
penance long  
and heavy for  
the ancient  
Mariner hath  
been accorded  
to the Polar  
Spirit, who re-  
turneth south-  
ward.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
I have not to declare ;  
But ere my living life returned,  
I heard, and in my soul discerned,  
Two voices in the air.

“ Is it he ? ” quoth one, “ Is this the man ?  
By Him who died on cross,  
With his cruel bow he laid full low  
The harmless Albatross.

“ The spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow,  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow.”

The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew :  
Quoth he, “ The man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.”

## PART VI.

## FIRST VOICE.

But tell me, tell me ! speak again,  
Thy soft response renewing—  
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?  
What is the Ocean doing ?

## SECOND VOICE.

Still as a slave before his lord,  
The Ocean hath no blast ;  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the moon is cast—

395

400

405

410

415

If he may know which way to go ;  
 For she guides him smooth or grim.  
 See, brother, see ! how graciously  
 She looketh down on him.

420

## FIRST VOICE.

The Mariner  
 hath been cast  
 into a trance ;  
 for the angelic  
 power causeth  
 the vessel to  
 drive northward  
 faster than  
 human life  
 could endure.

But why drives on that ship so fast,  
 Without or wave or wind ?

## SECOND VOICE.

The air is cut away before,  
 And closes from behind.

425

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !  
 Or we shall be belated :  
 For slow and slow that ship will go,  
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.

The super-  
 natural motion  
 is retarded ; the  
 Mariner awakes,  
 and his penance  
 begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on  
 As in a gentle weather :  
 'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;  
 The dead men stood together.

430

All stood together on the deck,  
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter ;  
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,  
 That in the moon did glitter.

435

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
 Had never passed away :  
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,  
 Nor turn them up to pray.

440

The curse is  
 finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt : once more  
 I viewed the ocean green,  
 And looked far forth, yet little saw  
 Of what had else been seen—

445

Like one, that on a lonesome road  
 Doth walk in fear and dread,  
 And having once turned round, walks on,  
 And turns no more his head ;  
 Because he knows a frightful fiend      450  
 Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
 Nor sound nor motion made :  
 Its path was not upon the sea,  
 In ripple or in shade.      455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
 Like a meadow-gale of spring—  
 It mingled strangely with my fears,  
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,  
 Yet she sailed softly too :  
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—  
 On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner behold-  
 eth his native country.      Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed  
 The lighthouse top I see ?      465  
 Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?  
 Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,  
 And I with sobs did pray—  
 'O let me be awake, my God !      470  
 Or let me sleep alway.'

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,  
 So smoothly it was strewn !  
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
 And the shadow of the moon.      475

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,  
 That stands above the rock :  
 The moonlight steeped in silentness  
 The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light, 480  
 Till rising from the same,

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,  
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
 In crimson colours came.

and appear in their own forms of light.  
 A little distance from the prow  
 Those crimson shadows were :  
 I turned my eyes upon the deck—  
 Oh Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
 And, by the holy rood !  
 A man all light, a seraph-man,  
 On every corse there stood. 490

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :  
 It was a heavenly sight !  
 They stood as signals to the land,  
 Each one a lovely light ; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :  
 No voice did they impart—  
 No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank  
 Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500  
 I heard the Pilot's cheer ;  
 My head was turned perforce away,  
 And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,  
I heard them coming fast :  
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy  
The dead men could not blast.

505

I saw a third—I heard his voice :  
It is the Hermit good !  
He singeth loud his godly hymns  
That he makes in the wood.  
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away  
The Albatross's blood.

510

## PART VII.

*The Hermit of the wood* This Hermit good lives in that wood  
Which slopes down to the sea. 515  
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !  
He loves to talk with marineres  
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—  
He hath a cushion plump : 520  
It is the moss that wholly hides  
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,  
“ Why, this is strange, I trow !  
Where are those lights so many and fair,  
That signal made but now ? ” 525

*approacheth the ship with wonder.* “ Strange, by my faith ! ” the Hermit said—  
“ And they answered not our cheer !  
The planks look warped ! and see those sails,  
How thin they are and sere ! 530  
I never saw aught like to them,  
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
 My forest-brook along ;  
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,  
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,  
 That eats the she-wolf's young."

535

"Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look—  
 (The Pilot made reply)  
 I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!"  
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

540

The boat came closer to the ship,  
 But I nor spake nor stirred ;  
 The boat came close beneath the ship,  
 And straight a sound was heard.

545

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,  
 Still louder and more dread :  
 It reached the ship, it split the bay ;  
 The ship went down like lead.

The ancient  
 Mariner is  
 saved in the  
 Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,  
 Which sky and ocean smote,  
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
 My body lay afloat ;  
 But swift as dreams, myself I found  
 Within the Pilot's boat.

550

555

Upon the whirl where sank the ship,  
 The boat spun round and round ;  
 And all was still, save that the hill  
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked  
 And fell down in a fit ;

560

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,  
Who now doth crazy go, 565  
Laughed loud and long, and all the white  
His eyes went to and fro.  
“ Ha ! ha ! ” quoth he, “ full plain I see  
The Devil knows how to row.”

And now, all in my own countree,  
I stood on the firm land ! 570  
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient  
Mariner earn-  
estly entreateth  
the Hermit to  
shrieve him ;  
and the penance  
of life falls on  
him.

“ O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man ! ”  
The Hermit crossed his brow.  
“ Say quick,” quoth he, “ I bid thee say—  
What manner of man art thou ! ”

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
With a woful agony,  
Which forced me to begin my tale ; 580  
And then it left me free,

And ever and  
anon through-  
out his future  
life an agony  
constraineth  
him to travel  
from land to  
land ;

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns :  
And till my ghastly tale is told,  
This heart within me burns. 585

I pass, like night, from land to land ;  
I have strange power of speech ;  
The moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me :  
To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door !  
 The wedding-guests are there ;  
 But in the garden-bower the bride  
 And bride-maids singing are :  
 And hark the little vesper bell,  
 Which biddeth me to prayer !

595

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been  
 Alone on a wide, wide sea :  
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
 Scarce seemèd there to be.

600

C sweeter than the marriage feast,  
 'Tis sweeter far to me,  
 To walk together to the kirk  
 With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,  
 And all together pray,  
 While each to his great Father bends,  
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
 And youths and maidens gay !

605

and to teach, by Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
 his own ex- ample, love and reverence to all  
 things that God made and loveth. To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 He prayeth well who loveth well  
 Both man and bird and beast.

610

He prayeth best who loveth best  
 All things both great and small ;  
 For the dear God who loveth us,  
 He made and loveth all.

615

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
 Whose beard with age is hoar,

Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest      620  
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn :  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the Morrow morn.      625



# WORDSWORTH.

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## THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,  
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years :  
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard  
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her ? She sees 5  
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;  
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,  
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,  
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail ; 10  
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,  
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but they fade,  
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade :  
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise, 15  
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.

—1797

---

## TO MY SISTER.

It is the first mild day of March :  
Each minute sweeter than before,  
The redbreast sings from the tall larch  
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air, 5  
Which seems a sense of joy to yield  
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,  
And grass in the green field.

My sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)  
 Now that our morning meal is done,  
 Make haste, your morning task resign ;  
 Come forth and feel the sun.

10

Edward will come with you ;—and, pray,  
 Put on with speed your woodland dress ;  
 And bring no book : for this one day  
 We'll give to idleness.

15

No joyless forms shall regulate  
 Our living calendar :  
 We from to-day, my Friend, will date  
 The opening of the year.

20

Love, now a universal birth,  
 From heart to heart is stealing,  
 From earth to man, from man to earth :  
 —It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more  
 Than years of toiling reason :  
 Our minds shall drink at every pore  
 The spirit of the season.

25

Some silent laws our hearts will make,  
 Which they shall long obey :  
 We for the year to come may take  
 Our temper from to-day.

30

And from the blessed power that rolls  
 About, below, above,  
 We'll frame the measure of our souls :  
 They shall be tuned to love.

35

Then come, my Sister ! come, I pray,  
 With speed put on your woodland dress ;  
 And bring no book : for this one day  
 We'll give to idleness.

40

1798

## EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

“Why, William, on that old grey stone,  
 Thus for the length of half a day,  
 Why, William, sit you thus alone,  
 And dream your time away ?

Where are your books ?—that light bequeathed  
 To Beings else forlorn and blind !  
 Up ! up ! and drink the spirit breathed  
 From dead men to their kind.

You look round on your Mother Earth,  
 As if she for no purpose bore you ;  
 As if you were her first-born birth,  
 And none had lived before you !”

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,  
 When life was sweet, I knew not why,  
 To me my good friend Matthew spake,  
 And thus I made reply :

“The eye—it cannot choose but see ;  
 We cannot bid the ear be still ;  
 Our bodies feel, where'er they be,  
 Against, or with our will.

10

15

20

Nor less I deem that there are Powers  
 Which of themselves our minds impress ;  
 That we can feed this mind of ours  
 In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum  
Of things for ever speaking,  
That nothing of itself will come,  
But we must still be seeking ?

25

—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,  
Conversing as I may,  
I sit upon this old grey stone,  
And dream my time away.”

30

—1798

## THE TABLES TURNED.

## AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Up ! up ! my Friend, and quit your books ;  
Or surely you'll grow double :  
Up ! up ! my Friend, and clear your looks ;  
Why all this toil and trouble ?

The sun, above the mountain's head,  
A freshening lustre mellow  
Through all the long green fields has spread,  
His first sweet evening yellow.

5

Books ! 'tis a dull and endless strife .  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music ! on my life,  
There's more of wisdom in it.

10

And hark ! how blithe the throstle sings !  
He, too, is no mean preacher :  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher.

15

She has a world of ready wealth,  
Our minds and hearts to bless—  
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

20

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings ;  
Our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things :—  
We murder to dissect.

25

Enough of Science and of Art ;  
Close up those barren leaves ;  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives.

30

—1798

---

“THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND  
SHOWER.”

Three years she grew in sun and shower,  
Then Nature said, “ A lovelier flower  
On earth was never sown ;  
This Child I to myself will take,  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A Lady of my own.

5

Myself will to my darling be  
Both law and impulse : and with me  
The Girl, in rock and plain,  
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,  
Shall feel an overseeing power  
To kindle or restrain.

10

She shall be sportive as the fawn  
 That wild with glee across the lawn  
 Or up the mountain springs ;  
 And her's shall be the breathing balm,  
 And her's the silence and the calm  
 Of mute insensate things.

15

The floating clouds their state shall lend  
 To her ; for her the willow bend ;  
 Nor shall she fail to see  
 Even in the motion of the Storm  
 Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form  
 By silent sympathy.

20

The stars of midnight shall be dear  
 To her ; and she shall lean her ear  
 In many a secret place  
 Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
 And beauty born of murmuring sound  
 Shall pass into her face.

25

30

And vital feelings of delight  
 Shall rear her form to stately height,  
 Her virgin bosom swell ;  
 Such thoughts to Lucy I will give  
 While she and I together live  
 Here in this happy dell."

35

Thus Nature spake—the work was done—  
 How soon my Lucy's race was run !  
 She died, and left to me  
 This heath, this calm and quiet scene ;  
 The memory of what has been,  
 And never more will be.

40

## INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS.

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN  
BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH. WRITTEN IN GERMANY.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe ! 5  
 Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !  
 And giv'st to forms and images a breath  
 And everlasting motion ! not in vain,  
 By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn  
 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me  
 The passions that build up our human soul ;  
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man ;  
 But with high objects, with enduring things,  
 With life and nature ; purifying thus 10  
 The elements of feeling and of thought,  
 And sanctifying by such discipline  
 Both pain and fear,—until we recognize  
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me 15  
 With stinted kindness. In November days,  
 When vapours rolling down the valleys made  
 A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods  
 At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,  
 When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 20  
 Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went  
 In solitude, such intercourse was mine :  
 Mine was it in the fields both day and night,  
 And by the waters, all the summer long.  
 And in the frosty season, when the sun 25  
 Was set, and, visible for many a mile,  
 The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,  
 I heeded not the summons : happy time  
 It was indeed for all of us ; for me  
 It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud 30

The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,  
Proud and exulting like an untired horse  
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel  
We hissed along the polished ice, in games  
Confederate, imitative of the chase      35  
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,  
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.  
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,  
And not a voice was idle: with the din  
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;      40  
The leafless trees and every icy crag  
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills  
Into the tumult sent an alien sound  
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,  
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west      45  
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired  
Into a silent bay, or sportively  
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,  
To cut across the reflex of a star ; 50  
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed  
Upon the glassy plain ; and oftentimes,  
When we had given our bodies to the wind,  
And all the shadowy banks on either side  
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still  
The rapid line of motion, then at once  
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,  
Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs  
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled  
With visible motion her diurnal round ! 60  
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,  
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched  
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

## NUTTING.

—It seems a day  
 (I speak of one from many singled out)  
 One of those heavenly days that cannot die ;  
 When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,  
 I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth      5  
 With a huge wallet o'er my shoulder slung,  
 A nutting-crook in hand ; and turned my steps  
 Tow'r'd the far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
 Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds,  
 Which for that service had been husbanded,      10  
 By exhortation of my frugal Dame—  
 Motly accoutrement, of power to smile  
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,  
 More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless rocks,  
 Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,      15  
 Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook  
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough  
 Dropped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign  
 Of devastation ; but the hazels rose  
 Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,      20  
 A virgin scene !—A little while I stood,  
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart  
 As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint,  
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed  
 The banquet ;—or beneath the trees I sate      25  
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played ;  
 A temper known to those who, after long  
 And weary expectation, have been blest  
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.  
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves      30  
 The violets of five seasons re-appear  
 And fade, unseen by any human eye ;

Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on  
Forever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,  
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones  
That, fleeced with moss, **under the shady trees**,  
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—  
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,  
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay  
Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure, 40  
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,  
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,  
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,  
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash  
And merciless ravage : and the shady nook 45  
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up  
Their quiet being : and, unless I now  
Confound my present feeling with the past,  
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned 50  
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,  
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
The silent trees and saw the intruding sky.—  
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades  
In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand 55  
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

—1799

## MICHAEL.

## A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps  
 Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,  
 You will suppose that with an upright path  
 Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent  
 The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5  
 But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook  
 The mountains have all opened out themselves,  
 And made a hidden valley of their own.  
 No habitation can be seen ; but they  
 Who journey thither find themselves alone 10  
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites  
 That overhead are sailing in the sky.  
 It is, in truth, an utter solitude ;  
 Nor should I have made mention of this Dell  
 But for one object which you might pass by, 15  
 Might see and notice not. Beside the brook  
 Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones :  
 And to that simple object appertains,  
 A story—unenriched with strange events,  
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20  
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first  
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me  
 Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men  
 Whom I already loved :—not verily  
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills 25  
 Where was their occupation and abode.  
 And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy  
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power  
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency  
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30

For passions that were not my own, and think  
(At random and imperfectly indeed)

On man, the heart of man, and human life.

Therefore, although it be a history

Homely and rude, I will relate the same

35

For the delight of a few natural hearts ;

And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake

Of youthful Poets, who among these hills

Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40  
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;  
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.  
His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,  
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,

45

And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt  
And watchful more than ordinary men.

Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,  
Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,

50

When others heeded not, he heard the South  
Make subterraneous music, like the noise  
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock  
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,  
"The winds are now devising work for me !"

55

And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives  
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him

Up to the mountains : he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,

That came to him, and left him, on the heights.

60

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose

That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,

Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts. 65  
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed  
 The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step  
 He had so often climbed ; which had impressed  
 So many incidents upon his mind  
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;  
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70  
 Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,  
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,  
 The certainty of honourable gain ;  
 Those fields, those hills,—what could they less?—had laid  
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him 75  
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.  
 His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—  
 Though younger than himself full twenty years. 80  
 She was a woman of a stirring life,  
 Whose heart was in her house : two wheels she had  
 Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;  
 That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest  
 It was because the other was at work. 85  
 The Pair had but one inmate in their house,  
 An only Child, who had been born to them  
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began  
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,  
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90  
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,  
 The one of an inestimable worth,  
 Made all their household. I may truly say,  
 That they were as a proverb in the vale  
 For endless industry. When day was gone, 95  
 And from their occupations out of doors

The Son and Father were come home, even then,  
Their labour did not cease ; unless when all  
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,  
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100  
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,  
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal  
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)  
And his old Father both betook themselves  
To such convenient work as might employ 105  
Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card  
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair  
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,  
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110  
That in our ancient uncouth country style  
With a huge and black projection overbrowed  
Large space beneath, as duly as the light  
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;  
An aged utensil, which had performed 115  
Service beyond all others of its kind.  
Early at evening did it burn—and late,  
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,  
Which, going by from year to year, had found,  
And left the couple neither gay perhaps 120  
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,  
Living a life of eager industry.  
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,  
There by the light of this old lamp they sate, 125  
Father and Son, while late into the night  
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,  
Making the cottage through the silent hours  
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.  
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,

And was a public symbol of the life 130  
 The thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,  
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground  
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,  
 High into Easdale, up to Dunmail-Raise,  
 And westward to the village near the lake ; 135  
 And from this constant light, so regular  
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all  
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,  
 Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years, 140  
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs  
 Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart  
 This son of his old age was yet more dear—  
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same  
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all— 145  
 Than that a child, more than all other gifts  
 That earth can offer to declining man,  
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,  
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they  
 By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150  
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,  
 His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes  
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,  
 Had done him female service, not alone  
 For pastime and delight, as is the use 155  
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced  
 To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked  
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy  
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160  
 Albeit of a stern, unbending mind,  
 To have the Young-one in his sight, when he

Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool  
 Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched  
 Under the large old oak, that near his door  
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,  
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,  
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called  
 The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.  
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade,  
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,  
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks  
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed  
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep  
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts  
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

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And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up  
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek  
 Two steady roses that were five years old ;  
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut  
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped  
 With iron, making it throughout in all  
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,  
 And gave it to the Boy ; wherewith equipt  
 He as a watchman oftentimes was placed  
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;  
 And, to his office prematurely called,  
 There stood the urchin, as you will divine,  
 Something between a hindrance and a help ;  
 And for this cause, not always, I believe,  
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;  
 Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,  
 Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand  
 Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,

195

Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,  
 He with his Father daily went, and they  
 Were as companions, why should I relate  
 That objects which the Shepherd loved before  
 Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came 200  
 Feelings and emanations—things which were  
 Light to the sun and music to the wind :  
 And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his father's sight the Boy grew up :  
 And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year, 205  
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived  
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came  
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time  
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210  
 In surety for his brother's son, a man  
 Of an industrious life, and ample means ;  
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly  
 Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now  
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215  
 A grievous penalty, but little less  
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,  
 At the first hearing, for a moment took  
 More hope out of his life than he supposed  
 That any old man ever could have lost. 220  
 As soon as he had armed himself with strength  
 To look his trouble in the face, it seemed  
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once  
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.  
 Such was his first resolve ; he thought again, 225  
 And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,  
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,  
 "I have been toiling more than seventy years,

And in the open sunshine of God's love  
Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours  
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think  
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.  
Our lot is a hard lot : the sun himself  
Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;  
And I have lived to be a fool at last  
To my own family. An evil man  
That was, and made an evil choice, if he  
Were false to us ; and if he were not false,  
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this  
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but  
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak  
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.  
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land  
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ;  
He shall possess it, free as is the wind  
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,  
Another kinsman—he will be our friend  
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,  
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,  
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift  
He quickly will repair this loss, and then  
He may return to us. If here he stay,  
What can be done ? Where every one is poor,  
What can be gained ?”

At this the old Man paused, . . . . . 255  
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind  
Was busy, looking back into past times.  
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,  
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door  
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence

And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought  
 A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares ;  
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad  
 Went up to London, found a master there,  
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy 265  
 To go and overlook his merchandise  
 Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,  
 And left estates and monies to the poor,  
 And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored  
 With marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 270  
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,  
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,  
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,  
 And thus resumed :—“ Well, Isabel ! this scheme  
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me. 275  
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.  
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I  
 Were younger ;—but this hope is a good hope.  
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best  
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth  
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night : 280  
 —If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night.”

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth  
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five days  
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long 285  
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare  
 Things needful for the journey of her son.  
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came  
 To stop her in her work : for when she lay  
 By Michael's side, she through the last two nights 290  
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :  
 And when they rose at morning she could see  
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by themselves  
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go :  
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,  
 None to remember—do not go away,  
 For if thou leave thy Father, he will die."  
 The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;  
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,  
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare  
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat  
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;  
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared  
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring : at length  
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,  
 With kind assurances that he would do  
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;  
 To which requests were added that forthwith  
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more  
 The letter was read over ; Isabel  
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;  
 Nor was there at that time on English land  
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel  
 Had to her house returned, the old Man said,  
 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word  
 The Housewife answered, talking much of things  
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,  
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length  
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll  
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed  
 To build a Sheepfold ; and, before he heard  
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,  
 For this same purpose he had gathered up

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A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge  
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.

With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :  
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330  
And thus the old Man spake to him : " My Son,  
To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart  
I look upon thee, for thou art the same  
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth  
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.

335

I will relate to thee some little part  
Of our two histories ; 'twill do thee good  
When thou art from me, even if I should touch  
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou  
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls 340  
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away  
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue  
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,  
And still I loved thee with increasing love.

Never to living ear came sweeter sounds 345

Than when I heard thee by our own fireside  
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;  
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy  
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,  
And in the open fields my life was passed

350

And on the mountains ; else I think that thou  
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.  
But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,  
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young  
Have played together, nor with me didst thou 355  
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."

Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words  
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,  
And said, " Nay, do not take it so—I see  
That these are things of which I need not speak.

360

—Even to the utmost I have been to thee  
 A kind and a good Father: and herein  
 I but repay a gift which I myself  
 Received at others' hands; for, though now old  
 Beyond the common life of man, I still  
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.  
 Both of them sleep together: here they lived,  
 As all their Forefathers had done; and when  
 At length their time was come, they were not loath  
 To give their bodies to the family mould.

365

I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:  
 But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,  
 And see so little gain from threescore years.

370

These fields were burdened when they came to me;  
 Till I was forty years of age, not more  
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.

375

I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,  
 And till these three weeks past the land was free.  
 —It looks as if it never could endure

Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,  
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good  
 That thou should'st go."

380

At this the old Man paused;  
 Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,  
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:

"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,  
 It is a work for me. But lay one stone—

385

Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.  
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live  
 To see a better day. At eighty-four

I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;  
 I will do mine.—I will begin again  
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:

390

Up to the heights and in among the storms

Will I without thee go again, and do  
 All works which I was wont to do alone, 395  
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy !  
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast  
 With many hopes ; it should be so—yes—yes—  
 I knew that thou could'st never have a wish  
 To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me 400  
 Only by links of love: when thou art gone,  
 What will be left to us !—But, I forget  
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone  
 As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,  
 When thou art gone away, should evil men 405  
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,  
 And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,  
 And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear  
 And all temptations, Luke, I pray that thou  
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived, 410  
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause  
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—  
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see  
 A work which is not here :—a covenant  
 'Twill be between us ;—but, whatever fate 415  
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,  
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped down  
 And, as his Father had requested, laid  
 The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420  
 The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart  
 He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept ;  
 And to the house together they returned.  
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,  
 Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy 425  
 Began his journey, and when he had reached  
 The public way, he put on a bold face ;

And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,  
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,  
That followed him till he was out of sight.

430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,  
Of Luke and his well-doing : and the Boy  
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,  
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout  
“The prettiest letters that were ever seen.”

435

Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.  
So, many months passed on ; and once again  
The Shepherd went about his daily work  
With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now  
Sometimes, when he could find a leisure hour,  
He to that valley took his way, and there  
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began  
To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,  
He in the dissolute city gave himself  
To evil courses : ignominy and shame  
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last  
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

440

445

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;  
’Twill make a thing endurable which else  
Would overset the brain or break the heart :  
I have conversed with more than one who well  
Remember the old Man, and what he was  
Years after he heard this heavy news.

450

His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks  
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,  
And listened to the wind ; and, as before,  
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,  
And for the land, his small inheritance.  
And to that hollow dell from time to time

455

460

Did he repair, to build the Fold of which  
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet  
 The pity which was then in every heart  
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all  
 That many and many a day he thither went  
 And never lifted up a single stone. | 465

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen,  
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,  
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.  
 The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470  
 He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,  
 And left the work unfinished when he died. |  
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel  
 Survive her Husband: at her death the estate  
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand. | 475  
 The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR  
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground  
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought  
 In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left  
 That grew beside their door; and the remains  
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen  
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll. 480

—1800

## TO THE CUCKOO.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,  
 I hear thee and rejoice.  
 O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,  
 Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass  
 Thy twofold shout I hear;  
 From hill to hill it seems to pass,  
 At once far off, and near.

5

Though babbling only, to the Vale,  
Of sunshine and of flowers,  
Thou bringest unto me a tale  
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring !  
Even yet thou art to me  
No bird, but an invisible thing,  
A voice, a mystery ;

The same whom in my school-boy days  
I listened to ; that Cry  
Which made me look a thousand ways  
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove  
Through woods and on the green ;  
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;  
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ;  
Can lie upon the plain  
And listen, till I do beget  
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird ! the earth we pace  
Again appears to be  
An unsubstantial faery place,  
That is fit home for Thee !

—1802

## TO THE DAISY.

Bright Flower ! whose home is everywhere !  
Bold in maternal Nature's care,  
And all the long year through the heir  
Of joy or sorrow ;

Methinks that there abides in thee  
Some concord with humanity,  
Given to no other flower I see  
    The forest thorough !

Is it that Man is soon deprest ?  
A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest,      10  
Does little on his memory rest,  
    Or on his reason,  
And thou would'st teach him how to find  
A shelter under every wind,  
A hope for times that are unkind      15  
    And every season ?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,  
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,  
With friends to greet thee, or without,  
    Yet pleased and willing ;      20  
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,  
And all things suffering from all,  
Thy function apostolical  
    In peace fulfilling.

—1802.

## THE GREEN LINNET.

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed  
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,  
With brightest sunshine round me spread  
    Of spring's unclouded weather,  
In this sequestered nook how sweet      5  
To sit upon my orchard-seat !  
And birds and flowers once more to greet,  
    My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest

In all this covert of the blest :

Hail to Thee, far above the rest

    In joy of voice and pinion !

Thou, Linnet ! in thy green array

Presiding Spirit here to-day

Dost lead the revels of the May ;

    And this is thy dominion.

10

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,

Make all one band of paramours,

Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,

    Art sole in thy employment :

A Life, a Presence like the Air,

Scattering thy gladness without care,

Too blest with any one to pair ;

    Thyself thy own enjoyment.

20

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees

25

That twinkle to the gusty breeze,

Behold him perched in ecstasies,

    Yet seeming still to hover ;

There ! where the flutter of his wings

30

Upon his back and body flings

Shadows and sunny glimmerings,

    That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,

A Brother of the dancing leaves ;

Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves

35

    Pours forth his song in gushes ;

As if by that exulting strain

He mocked and treated with disdain

The voiceless Form he chose to feign,

    While fluttering in the bushes.

40

## THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Behold her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland Lass !  
Reaping and singing by herself ;  
Stop here, or gently pass !  
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
And sings a melancholy strain ;  
Oh listen ! for the Vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound. 5

No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt  
Among Arabian sands :  
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,  
Breaking the silence of the seas  
Among the farthest Hebrides. 10

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—  
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow  
For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago : 20  
Or is it some more humble lay,  
Familiar matter of to-day ?  
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,  
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang  
As if her song could have no ending ;  
I saw her singing at her work,  
And o'er the sickle bending ;—  
I listened, motionless and still ;  
And, as I mounted up the hill, 30  
The music in my heart I bore  
Long after it was heard no more. —1803 (?)

## "SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT."

She was a Phantom of delight  
 When first she gleamed upon my sight ;  
 A lovely Apparition, sent  
 To be a moment's ornament ;  
 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ; 5  
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;  
 But all things else about her drawn  
 From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;  
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,  
 To haunt, to startle, and way-lay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,  
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too !  
 Her household motions light and free,  
 And steps of virgin-liberty ;  
 A countenance in which did meet 15  
 Sweet records, promises as sweet ;  
 A Creature not too bright or good  
 For human nature's daily food ;  
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

And now I see with eye serene  
 The very pulse of the machine ;  
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,  
 A Traveller between life and death ;  
 The reason firm, the temperate will, 25  
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;  
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned  
 To warn, to comfort, and command ;  
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright  
 With something of angelic light. 30

## ODE TO DUTY.

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God !  
 O Duty ! if that name thou love  
 Who art a light to guide, a rod  
 To check the erring, and reprove ;  
 Thou who art victory and law 5  
 When empty terrors overawe ;  
 From vain temptations dost set free ;  
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye  
 Be on them ; who, in love and truth, 10  
 Where no misgiving is, rely  
 Upon the genial sense of youth :  
 Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot ;  
 Who do thy work, and know it not :  
 Oh ! if through confidence misplaced 15  
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around them  
 cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,  
 And happy will our nature be,  
 When love is an unerring light,  
 And joy its own security. 20  
 And they a blissful course may hold  
 Even now, who, not unwisely bold,  
 Live in the spirit of this creed ;  
 Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried : 25  
 No sport of every random gust,  
 Yet being to myself a guide  
 Too blindly have reposed my trust :

And oft, when in my heart was heard  
 Thy timely mandate, I deferred  
 The task, in smoother walks to stray ;  
 But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may. 30

Through no disturbance of my soul,  
 Or strong compunction in me wrought,  
 I supplicate for thy control ; 35  
 But in the quietness of thought :  
 Me this unchartered freedom tires ;  
 I feel the weight of chance-desires ;  
 My hopes no more must change their name ;  
 I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear  
 The Godhead's most benignant grace ;  
 Nor know we anything so fair  
 As is the smile upon thy face :  
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds 45  
 And fragrance in thy footing treads ;  
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;  
 And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh  
 and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !  
 I call thee : I myself commend 50  
 Unto thy guidance from this hour ;  
 Oh, let my weakness have an end !  
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,  
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;  
 The confidence of reason give ; 55  
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

## ELEGIAC STANZAS.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM,  
PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile !  
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee :  
I saw thee every day ; and all the while  
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air ! 5  
So like, so very like, was day to day !  
Whene'er I looked; thy Image still was there ;  
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm ! It seemed no sleep ;  
No mood, which season takes away, or brings ; 10  
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep  
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah ! THEN,—if mine had been the Painter's hand,  
To express what then I saw ; and add the gleam,  
The light that never was, on sea or land, 15  
The consecration, and the Poet's dream ;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile,  
Amid a world how different from this !  
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile ;  
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss. 20

Thou should'st have seemed a treasure-house divine  
Of peaceful years ; a chronicle of heaven ;—  
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine  
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease, 25  
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife ;  
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,  
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,  
 Such Picture would I at that time have made :  
 And seen the soul of truth in every part,  
 A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more ;  
 I have submitted to a new control :  
 A power is gone, which nothing can restore ;  
 A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold  
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been :  
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old ;  
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend ! who would have been the Friend,  
 If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,  
 This work of thine I blame not, but commend ;  
 This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh ! 'tis a passionate work—yet wise and well, 45  
 Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;  
 That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,  
 This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,  
 I love to see the look with which it braves,  
 Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,  
 The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves. 50

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,  
 Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind !  
 Such happiness, wherever it be known,  
 Is to be pitied ; for 'tis surely blind. 55

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,  
 And frequent sights of what is to be borne !  
 Such sights or worse, as are before me here.—  
 Not without hope we suffer and we mourn. 60

## SEPTEMBER, 1819.

The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields  
 Are hung, as if with golden shields,  
 Bright trophies of the sun !  
 Like a fair sister of the sky,  
 Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,  
 The mountains looking on.

5

And, sooth to say, yon vocal grove,  
 Albeit uninspired by love,  
 By love untaught to ring,  
 May well afford to mortal ear  
 An impulse more profoundly dear  
 Than music of the Spring.

10

For *that* from turbulence and heat  
 Proceeds, from some uneasy seat  
 In nature's struggling frame,  
 Some region of impatient life :  
 And jealousy, and quivering strife,  
 Therein a portion claim.

15

This, this is holy ;—while I hear  
 These vespers of another year,  
 This hymn of thanks and praise,  
 My spirit seems to mount above  
 The anxieties of human love,  
 And earth's precarious days.

20

But list !—though winter storms be nigh.      25  
 Unchecked is that soft harmony :  
 There lives Who can provide  
 For all his creatures, and in Him  
 Even like the radiant Seraphim,  
 These choristers confide.      30

## UPON THE SAME OCCASION.

Departing summer hath assumed  
 An aspect tenderly illumed,  
 The gentlest look of spring ;  
 That calls from yonder leafy shade  
 Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,  
 A timely carolling.

5

No faint and hesitating trill,  
 Such tribute as to winter chill  
 The lonely redbreast pays !  
 Clear, loud, and lively is the din,  
 From social warblers gathering in  
 Their harvest of sweet lays.

10

Nor doth the example fail to cheer  
 Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,  
 And yellow on the bough :—  
 Fall, rosy garlands, from my head !  
 Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed  
 Around a younger brow !

15

Yet will I temperately rejoice ;  
 Wide is the range, and free the choice  
 Of undiscordant themes ;  
 Which, haply, kindred souls may prize  
 Not less than vernal ecstasies  
 And passion's feverish dreams.

20

For deathless powers to verse belong,  
 And they like Demi-gods are strong  
 On whom the Muses smile ;  
 But some their function have disclaimed,  
 Best pleased with what is aptliest framed  
 To enervate and defile.

25

30

Not such the initiatory strains  
 Committed to the silent plains  
 In Britain's earliest dawn :  
 Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,  
 While all-too-daringly the veil  
 Of nature was withdrawn !

35

Nor such the spirit-stirring note  
 When the live chords Alceus smote,  
 Inflamed by sense of wrong ;  
 Woe ! woe to Tyrants ! from the lyre  
 Broke threateningly in sparkles dire  
 Of fierce vindictive song.

40

And not unhallowèd was the page  
 By wingèd Love inscribed, to assuage  
 The pangs of vain pursuit ;  
 Love listening while the Lesbian Maid  
 With finest touch of passion swayed  
 Her own Æolian lute.

45

O ye, who patiently explore  
 The wreck of Herculanean lore,  
 What rapture ! could ye seize  
 Some Theban fragment, or unroll  
 One precious, tender-hearted scroll  
 Of pure Simonides.

50

That were, indeed, a genuine birth  
 Of poesy ; a bursting forth  
 Of genius from the dust :  
 What Horace glорied to behold,  
 What Maro loved, shall we unfold ?  
 Can haughty Time be just !

55

60

## TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH.

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER  
POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820.)

The Minstrels played their Christmas tune  
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves ;  
While, smitten by a lofty moon,  
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,  
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,  
That overpowered their natural green. 5

Through hill and valley every breeze  
Had sunk to rest with folded wings :  
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,  
Nor check, the music of the strings ;  
So stout and hardy were the band  
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand ! 10

And who but listened ?—till was paid  
Respect to every Inmate's claim :  
The greeting given, the music played,  
In honour of each household name,  
Duly pronounced with lusty call,  
And “Merry Christmas” wished to all ! 15

O Brother ! I revere the choice  
That took thee from thy native hills ;  
And it is given thee to rejoice :  
Though public care full often tills  
(Heaven only witness of the toil)  
A barren and ungrateful soil. 20

Yet would that Thou, with me and mine,  
Hadst heard this never-failing rite ;  
And seen on other faces shine 25

A true revival of the light  
 Which Nature and these rustic Powers,  
 In simple childhood, spread through ours !

30

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait  
 On these expected annual rounds ;  
 Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate  
 Call forth the unelaborate sounds,  
 Or they are offered at the door  
 That guards the lowliest of the poor.

35

How touching, when at midnight, sweep  
 Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,  
 To hear—and sink again to sleep !  
 Or, at an earlier call, to mark,  
 By blazing fire, the still suspense  
 Of self-complacent innocence ;

40

The mutual nod—the grave disguise  
 Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er ;  
 And some unbidden tears that rise  
 For names once heard, and heard no more ;  
 Tears brightened by the serenade  
 For infant in the cradle laid.

45

Ah ! not for emerald fields alone,  
 With ambient streams more pure and bright  
 Than fabled Cytherea's zone  
 Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,  
 Is to my heart of hearts endeared  
 The ground where we were born and reared !

50

Hail, ancient Manners ! sure defence,  
 Where they survive, of wholesome laws ;  
 Remnants of love whose modest sense

55

Thus into narrow room withdraws ;  
 Hail, Usages of pristine mould,  
 And ye that guard them Mountains old !

60

Bear with me, Brother : quench the thought  
 That slights this passion, or condemns ;  
 If thee fond Fancy ever brought  
 From the proud margin of the Thames,  
 And Lambeth's venerable towers,  
 To humbler streams and greener bowers.

65

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,  
 Short leisure even in busiest days,  
 Moments to cast a look behind,  
 And profit by those kindly rays  
 That through the clouds do sometimes steal,  
 And all the far-off past reveal.

70

Hence, while the imperial City's din  
 Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,  
 A pleased attention I may win  
 To agitations less severe, . . .  
 That neither overwhelm nor cloy,  
 But fill the hollow vale with joy !

75

## TO A SKYLARK.

Ethereal minstrel ! pilgrim of the sky !  
 Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound ?  
 Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye  
 Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground ?  
 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,  
 Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

5

[To the last point of vision, and beyond,  
 Mount, daring warbler ! that love-prompted strain,  
 ('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)  
 Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain :                   10  
 Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege ! to sing  
 All independent of the leafy spring.]

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood ;  
 A privacy of glorious light is thine ;  
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood                   15  
 Of harmony, with instinct more divine :  
 Type of the wise who soar, but never roam ;  
 True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home !

—1825

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COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE, NEAR CALAIS,  
 AUGUST, 1802.

Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west,  
 Star of my Country !—on the horizon's brink  
 Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink  
 On England's bosom ; yet well pleased to rest,  
 Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest,                   5  
 Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,  
 Should'st be my Country's emblem ; and should'st wink,  
 Bright Star ! with laughter on her banners, drest  
 In thy fresh beauty. There ! that dusky spot  
 Beneath thee, that is England ; there she lies.                   10  
 Blessings be on you both ! one hope, one lot,  
 One life, one glory !—I, with many a fear  
 For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,  
 Among men who do not love her, linger here.

## WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O Friend ! I know not which way I must look  
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,  
To think that now our life is only drest  
For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,  
Or groom ! — We must run glittering like a brook 5  
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :  
The wealthiest man among us is the best :  
No grandeur now in nature or in book  
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
This is idolatry : and these we adore : 10  
Plain living and high thinking are no more .  
The homely beauty of the good old cause  
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
And pure religion breathing household laws.

## LONDON, 1802.

Milton ! thou should'st be living at this hour :  
England hath need of thee : she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;  
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart :  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea : 10  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way, —  
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF THAT THE FLOOD."

It it not to be thought of that the Flood  
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea  
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity  
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood," 5  
Roused though it be full often to a mood  
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,  
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands  
Should perish ; and to evil and to good  
Be lost forever. In our halls is hung  
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old : 10  
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
That Shakespeare spake ; the faith and morals hold  
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung  
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

—1802

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY WHAT HAS TAMED."

When I have borne in memory what has tamed  
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart  
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert  
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed 5  
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?  
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,  
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,  
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.  
For dearly must we prize thee ; we who find  
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men ; 10  
And I by my affection was beguiled :  
What wonder if a Poet now and then,  
Among the many movements of his mind,  
Felt for thee as a lover or a child !

—1802

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,  
SEPT. 3, 1802.

Earth has not anything to show more fair :  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty :  
This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ; 5  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !  
The river glideth at his own sweet will :  
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

5

10

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION  
OF SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,  
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :  
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !  
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee 5  
Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven :  
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,  
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.  
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :  
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ; 10  
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be  
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,  
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,  
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee ! —1806

## TO SLEEP.

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,  
 One after one ; the sound of rain, and bees  
 Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,  
 Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;  
 I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie 5  
 Sleepless ! and soon the small birds' melodies  
 Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;  
 And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.  
 Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,  
 And could not win thee, Sleep ! by any stealth ; 10  
 So do not let me wear to-night away :  
 Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?  
 Come, blessed barrier between day and day,  
 Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !

—Before 1807

## "BROOK! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS."

Brook ! whose society the Poet seeks,  
 Intent his wasted spirits to renew ;  
 And whom the curious Painter doth pursue  
 Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,  
 And tracks thee dancing down thy waterbreaks : 5  
 If wish were mine some type of thee to view,  
 Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do  
 Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,  
 Channels for tears ; no Naiad should'st thou be,—  
 Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs : 10  
 It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee  
 With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,  
 And hath bestowed on thee a safer good ;  
 Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL,  
CAMBRIDGE.

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,  
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—  
Albeit labouring for a scanty band  
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense  
And glorious Work of fine intelligence ! 5  
Give all thou canst ; high Heaven rejects the lore  
Of nicely-calculated less or more ;  
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense  
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof  
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells, 10  
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells  
Lingering, and wandering on as loth to die ; .  
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortality.

—1820-21

THE SAME CONTINUED.

They dreamt not of a perishable home  
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear  
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here ;  
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam ;  
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam 5  
Melts, if it cross the threshold ; where the wreath  
Of awe-struck wisdom droops : or let my path  
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome  
Hath typified by reach of daring art  
Infinity's embrace ; whose guardian crest, 10  
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread  
As now, when She hath also seen her breast  
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part  
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

—1820-21

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET; CRITIC, YOU  
HAVE FROWNED."

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,  
Mindless of its just honours; with this key  
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody  
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound; 5  
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;  
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;  
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf  
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned  
His visionary brow: a glowworm lamp,  
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland 10  
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp  
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

—Before 1827

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## NOTES.



## NOTES.

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### COLERIDGE.

COLERIDGE was great both as a poet and as an abstract thinker. His poetical activity is included mainly within the first thirty years of his life, and, as it is with the poet that we are here concerned, his philosophical work and the latter half of his life will here be touched upon very briefly. There is no biography in the annals of English literature that gives the reader a profounder and sadder sense of wasted opportunities and wasted powers than that of Coleridge. His achievement in poetry is exquisite and unique, his criticism more suggestive and inspiring than that of any other English writer, his philosophical thinking had a wide and far-reaching influence, yet we feel all this is but a meagre result in comparison with what his extraordinary intellectual endowments seemed to promise.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born the 21st October, 1772, at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, where his father, the Rev. John Coleridge, was vicar of the parish and master of the Free Grammar School. The father was an interesting man with a lack of fitness for the practical affairs of life, with a love of learning, and a bent towards pedantry—all of which he transmitted to his famous son. A glance in the *Dictionary of National Biography* at the number of descendants of this eccentric parson who have distinguished themselves in various spheres, will amply demonstrate that the poet came of no ordinary stock. Samuel was the youngest of a family of thirteen, and was, in consequence, a spoiled child. “So,” he writes (*Letters I*, p. 11), “I became fretful and timorous, and a tell-tale; and the schoolboys drove me from play, and were always tormenting me, and hence I took no pleasure in boyish sports, but read incessantly. . . . So I became a *dreamer*, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity; and I was fretful and inordinately passionate, and, as I could not play at anything, and was slothful, I was despised and hated by the boys; and, because I could read and spell and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost an unnatural ripeness, I was flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain, and despised most of the boys that were at all near my own age, and before I was eight years old I was a *character*. Sensibility,

imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for all who traversed the orbit of my understanding were even then prominent and manifest."

82. After the sudden death of his father, the boy was sent, in April, 1792, to the famous Blue-coat School, Christ's Hospital. With this event his domestic life seems to have come to an end; even his holidays were not spent at home. His sensitive and imaginative nature was submitted to the harsh discipline of a great boarding-school, a community of some three hundred boys, situated in the very heart of London.\* At school Coleridge formed some warm friendships, the most important and permanent being that with Charles Lamb. He showed himself an apt scholar, and in 1798 was one of those selected by the headmaster to be specially trained for the University Scholarships. As in childhood, so in boyhood, he was precocious and imaginative; we hear little or nothing of games, but much of poetry and metaphysics. In the latter he was indeed, if we are to trust his own statements, a juvenile prodigy; and these statements receive confirmation from Lamb: "Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!—How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold in thy deep and sweet intonations the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar—while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity boy*."† These "preposterous pursuits" were by no means altogether wholesome either for the boy's mental or moral development, and he narrates how he was rescued from the lassitude in which they left him, through meeting with the poems of a certain Mr. Bowles. These were a very minor outcome of that tide of influence which revolutionized literature in the latter half of the Eighteenth century, and which found more adequate expression in the works of Cowper and Burns—writers who were at this date unknown to Coleridge. What attracted him to the sonnets of Bowles was their emotional quality, their sincerity and directness, and the love for nature

\* For light upon the character of his school life see *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. I; the fifth of Coleridge's collected *Letters*, and Lamb's Essays on Christ's Hospital.

† Lamb's *Christ's Hospital Five-and-thirty Years Ago*.

which they displayed, as distinguished from the conventionality and intellectualism that had long been characteristic of English poetry. This discovery so kindled his enthusiasm that, not having money to purchase copies, he made forty transcriptions as presents for his friends. Although he had long been a writer of verses, the work of Bowles stimulated his poetic activity, and from this point we may date the beginning of his poetic career.

Having been successful in winning a scholarship, Coleridge in October, 1791, went into residence at Jesus College, Cambridge. Presently he wins the Browne gold medal for a Greek ode and is a likely candidate for a Craven scholarship. But released from the stricter discipline of school he soon began to exhibit his innate tendency to dissipate his energies, or at least to devote them to anything rather than that which it was his plain duty and interest to do. At the same time his speculative tendencies led him to sympathize with the revolutionary views, in these years rife in France and elsewhere, both in politics and religion. This would not recommend him in the eyes of those in authority. He seems to have fallen into irregular courses ; and in December, 1793, he suddenly left college and enlisted. For this step the main cause was, probably, debts ; a contributory one may have been disappointment in a passion which he had, since Christ's Hospital days, cherished for Mary Evans, the sister of a school-mate. In course of time his whereabouts becoming known to his friends, they bought his discharge ; and in April, 1794, with many expressions of contrition, he resumed his life at college ; but it is little likely that he ever again really settled down to his proper studies. In the following summer, on a visit to Oxford, he became acquainted with Robert Southey ; the two young men had a kindred interest in poetry and in revolutionary ideas ; a warm friendship grew up between them, and Coleridge visited Southey's home at Bristol. In their ardour for social reform they begot a scheme for the regeneration of the world which they called "Pantisocracy." "Twelve gentlemen of good education and liberal principles are to embark with twelve ladies in April next, fixing themselves in some delightful part of the new back settlements of America. The labour of each man for two or three hours a day it was imagined would suffice to support the colony. The produce was to be common property, there was to be a good library, and the ample leisure was to be devoted to study, discussion, and the education of the children on a settled system. The women were to be employed in taking care of the infant children and in other suitable occupations, not neglecting the cultivation of their

minds. . . . 'They calculate that every gentleman providing £125 will be sufficient to carry the scheme into execution.'\*\*\* Various young enthusiasts were found who professed themselves willing to embark in this undertaking. The necessary funds Coleridge proposed to furnish from the proceeds of literary work, and meanwhile he secured the requisite female companion by becoming engaged to Miss Sarah Fricker, whose sister was betrothed to Southey. This step he took, although during the summer he had suffered keenly from his first passion, which by an accidental encounter with Mary Evans had been kindled into new violence. Such schemes as these were not likely to conduce to regular academic work; and in December he finally left the university without taking his degree. About the same time a report of Miss Evans' approaching marriage awakened the old feelings in all their strength. We find him in London forgetful of the practical issues of life, and of his engagement to Miss Fricker, writing sonnets† on distinguished personages for the *Morning Chronicle*, and solacing himself with the companionship of Lamb. This condition of things was brought to an end by the energetic Southey, who came in person to London and carried Coleridge back to Bristol—to Pantisocracy and Miss Fricker.

With his residence in Bristol, Coleridge's mature life begins. He was profoundly interested now, as always, in great public questions, and proposed to disseminate his ideas and win a livelihood by lectures and by writing. His portrait is outlined (probably with sufficient truth) by a lady who met him at this time: "A young man of brilliant understanding, great eloquence, desperate fortune, democratic principles, and entirely led away by the feelings of the moment." Having quarrelled with Southey (with whom he lodged) because of Southey's desertion of Pantisocracy, and having been promised by a Bristol bookseller, Cottle, a guinea-and-a-half for every one hundred lines of his poetry, he, in October, 1795, married Miss Sarah Fricker. The wedded pair established themselves at Clevedon, in the neighbourhood of Bristol, in a cottage commemorated in the poem entitled *The Eolian Harp*. His married life was, at the outset, happy; Coleridge was conscious of his powers, and this consciousness may well have been strengthened by the impression which he produced upon nearly all who met him—an impression largely due to the suggestiveness and eloquence of his conversation. He was overflowing with hope and with visionary projects, and the world seemed full of promise. Cottle was bringing

\* Dykes Campbell's summary of Poole's account of the scheme.

† For an example, see the lines to *La Fayette* in the *Appendix* to this volume.

*out a collection of his poems (published April, 1796); but to provide a steady source of income he started a periodical entitled *The Watchman*. To this latter scheme Coleridge's dilatoriness and unbusiness-like habits, in two months and a half, proved fatal. Some friends, with the wealthy tanner Poole at their head, presented a considerable sum of money to tide the poet over his financial difficulties. After abandoning various plans,—for going to London as an editor, for teaching, etc.,—Coleridge, at length, on the last day of 1796, took up his abode in a small cottage at Nether Stowey that he might be near his friend Poole, and that he might carry into effect his latest dream of making a livelihood from literature and agriculture combined. “*My farm will be a garden of one acre and a half, in which I mean to raise vegetables and corn enough for myself and wife, and feed a couple of snouted and grunting cousins from the refuse. My evenings I shall devote to literature; and, by reviews, the magazine, and other shilling-scavenger employments, shall probably gain forty pounds a year; which economy and self-denial, gold-beaters, shall hammer till it covers my annual expenses.*” Thus began the happiest and by far the most fruitful period in Coleridge's life. A large element in its happiness and the main stimulus to its fruitfulness was companionship with William and Dorothy Wordsworth. The two young poets had already met, but a visit to the Wordsworths in June, 1797, was the beginning of close intimacy. They were drawn together by similar pursuits, hopes, feelings, and ideas. Coleridge was employed upon a tragedy, *Osorio*, Wordsworth upon another, *The Borderers*. Coleridge writes that he feels himself a “little man” by Wordsworth's side, and thinks his friend the greatest man he ever knew. The impression on the other side is recorded in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal: “He [Coleridge] is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. At first I thought him very plain, that is, for about three minutes: he is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough black hair. But, if you hear him speak for five minutes, you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey—such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind; it has more of the ‘poet's eye in fine frenzy rolling’ than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead.” We may add to this, a description of himself which Coleridge had sent to a correspondent not many months earlier: “As to my shape, 'tis good enough if measured, but*

my gait is awkward, and the walk of the whole man indicates *indolence* capable of energies. I am, and ever have been, a great reader, and have read almost everything—a library cormorant. I am deep in all out-of-the-way books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical era. I have read and digested most of the historical writers; but I do not like history. Metaphysics and poetry, and ‘facts of mind,’ that is, accounts of all the strange phantoms that ever possessed ‘your philosophy’ dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies. In short, I seldom read except to amuse myself, and I am almost always reading. Of useful knowledge, I am a so-so chemist, and I love chemistry. All else is blank; but I will be (please God) a horticulturist and a farmer. I compose very little, and I absolutely hate composition, and such is my dislike that even a sense of duty is too weak to overpower it. . . . In conversation I am impassioned, and oppose what I deem error with an eagerness which is often mistaken for personal asperity; but I am ever so swallowed up in the thing that I perfectly forget my opponent.”\*

In the course of the summer, Coleridge’s visit was returned; and in August the Wordsworths were successful in renting a country house at Alfoxden, among the Quantock Hills, and only three miles from Nether Stowey. The friends were almost daily together. The result upon Coleridge was not merely to stimulate his poetic power but to give a new character to his poetry, especially in its use of, and attitude towards, nature. Almost all Coleridge’s best work in poetry was written in this and the following year, e.g.: *The Ancient Mariner*, the first part of *Christabel*, *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*, *The Nightingale*, *Ode to France*, *Kubla Khan*, *Frost at Midnight*, etc.

At this period Coleridge not infrequently preached in Unitarian pulpits, and on one of these occasions the young Hazlitt heard him; in his *Essays*† he thus records his impressions: “It was in January of 1798 that I rose one morning before daylight to walk ten miles in the mud to hear this celebrated person preach. When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, ‘And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.’ As he gave out this text his voice ‘rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,’ and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom

\* *Letters I*, pp. 180-1.

† The one entitled *First Acquaintance with Poets*.

of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. . . . The preacher then launched into his subject like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state—not their alliance but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. . . . As for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced under the eye and with the sanction of religion."

In the following spring Hazlitt visited Coleridge at Nether Stowey: "I arrived and was well received. The country about Nether Stowey is beautiful, green and hilly and near the sea-shore. . . . In the afternoon Coleridge took me over to All-Foxden, a romantic old family mansion of the St. Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. . . . Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the *Lyrical Ballads*, which were still in manuscript. . . . As soon as breakfast was over we strolled out to the park, and, seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud, with a sonorous and musical voice, the ballad of 'Betty Foy.' . . . Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high

Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate  
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight. He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a matter-of-factness, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself from a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang. He said, however (if I remember right), that this objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces, that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was

more gaunt and Don Quixotic-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own 'Peter Bell.' There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about the temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than their outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn stately expression of the rest of his face. . . . He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr*, like the crust on wine. . . . We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read the story of *Peter Bell* in the open air; and the comment upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, 'his face was as a book where men might read strange matters,' and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth which acts as a spell upon the hearer and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me himself that he liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption."

In this spring arrangements were made for the publication of a volume of poems which should contain contributions by both poets, viz., the *Lyrical Ballads* mentioned in the extract above. In congenial work upon these poems, and in the sort of life of which Hazlitt gives a glimpse, the summer passed—

That summer under whose indulgent skies,  
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved  
Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,  
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,  
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man  
The bright eyed Mariner, and rueful woes  
Didst utter of the lady Christabel;

And I, associate with such labour, steeped  
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,  
Murmuring of him who, joyous leap, was found  
After the perils of his moonlight ride.\*

Meanwhile Coleridge's pecuniary difficulties continued to harass him. He had some thoughts of taking charge of a Unitarian congregation, when the two brothers Wedgwood, sons of the famous potter, unsolicited, offered him an annuity of £150 for life without conditions, but with the purpose of enabling him to devote himself exclusively to his literary and philosophical work. Thus released at least from immediate financial pressure, Coleridge in company with Wordsworth and Dorothy set out for study in Germany September, 1798. In the same month the *Lyrical Ballads* were published ; though one of the most notable volumes in the development of English poetry, it attracted no great attention. The poems by Coleridge which it contained were *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Nightingale*, *The Foster Mother's Tale* and *The Dungeon* ; Wordsworth's contributions were much more numerous and occupied something like two-thirds of the book.

In Germany Coleridge and the Wordsworths separated, and the former during the nine months of his sojourn devoted himself to gaining familiarity with the language, literature, and people of the country. Some years later he became a diligent student of the latest developments of its philosophy. He thus prepared himself for one of his distinctive services—that of being a pioneer in the work of introducing German literature, and German critical and philosophical tendencies and ideas into the intellectual life of England.

At his return home in the summer of 1799 Coleridge had not attained his twenty-seventh year, yet already his poetic activity was nearly at an end and his best days were behind him. The weaknesses which were to prove disastrous had already won an ascendancy over him :—dilatoriness, visionariness, inability to settle down to any one task, or to persist in any fixed course of life. His energies were wasted in sketching plausible and magnificent designs which he lacked continuity of purpose to complete. What he did subsequently achieve, was mostly work written for the moment under the pressure of pecuniary need, or hastily and imperfectly finished because procrastinated to the last

\* From Wordsworth's *Prelude* ; the allusion in the last line is to the story of "Betty Foy" (*The Idiot Boy*), which, along with *Simon Lee*, *Goody Blake*, *We are Seven*, *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, *Lines Written about Tintern Abbey*, and others, was included in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

moment. We can only in the briefest fashion outline these thirty-five years of weakness and misery, of broken purposes and fragmentary accomplishment.

After his arrival in England he occupied himself with newspaper work in London, and in making a poetical version of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, pronounced to be one of the best translations in the language and superior even to the original. Abandoning, in a few months, his connection with the press, he settled in the summer of 1800 at Keswick, in the Lake country, that he might be near Wordsworth. His health, which had never been good, began to be seriously impaired; he suffered intensely from rheumatic pains; and in order to get relief resorted to laudanum, of which he had probably made dangerously free use for some years back. The natural result followed; before 1803 he had become a slave of opium. The physical and mental effects of this indulgence rapidly intensified the natural weaknesses of his character. To the other troubles, domestic infelicity was soon added. Coleridge and his wife lacked common tastes, interests and sympathies; on her side there are said to have been faults of temper; that on his side he might give cause for such faults, is sufficiently apparent. Though a deeply affectionate father, home became more and more distasteful to him. Of his own weakness, of the frittering away of his powers and time, he was fully conscious. A profound discouragement overwhelmed him; his letters have the tone of premature old age. His state of mind is depicted with extraordinary power in the latest of his great poetic achievements, the *Ode on Desjection*,\* written April 4th, 1802. "No sadder cry from the depths," writes Mr. Dykes Campbell, "was ever uttered even by Coleridge, none more sincere, none more musical. (He felt that poetically he was dead, and that if not dead spiritually, he had lost his spiritual identity.)" In 1803 he began a trip through Scotland in company with William and Dorothy Wordsworth. But the companionship even of these, his dearest friends, was in his morbid state unendurable to him; he quitted them and completed the journey on foot and alone. With the idea that he might be benefited by a warmer climate he sailed to Malta in the spring of 1804. There and in Italy he remained for some two years, and won, as elsewhere and always, warm friends. Though during some months he acted as secretary to the Governor of Malta, his morbid, mental and physical condition is abundantly manifest in his correspondence. In August, 1806, he landed in England, as he writes,

\* Printed in the *Appendix* to this volume.

"ill, penniless and worse than homeless." For some time he neither returned home nor communicated with his family. In 1808 he carried out a plan which had long been in his mind of giving a course of lectures in London on Shakespeare and Milton; and subsequently in various years similar courses were given.

The lectures inevitably suffered under the usual drawbacks; their preparation was either delayed to the last moment, or, sometimes, altogether omitted. Being unwritten, they were dependent on the circumstances of the moment, were more or less desultory, and varied between excellence and positive dulness. Yet little justice as he did to himself in these lectures, the inadequate short-hand reports of such as have been preserved, suffice to show (in the words of Mr. Campbell) "that Coleridge's audiences probably heard the finest literary criticism which has ever been given in English."

At times there were intervals of amendment in Coleridge's mental and physical condition; and in one of these periods, in 1808, he began the publication of a periodical entitled The Friend, which, of course, was a failure. In 1810, through certain misunderstandings, Coleridge lost what was one of the chief of his few remaining sources of happiness and satisfaction, the friendship of the Wordsworths. From this date to the year 1816 extends the darkest period of his life. Nearly all his old friends were alienated; he was involved in debt; his sources of income were most precarious—writing for the daily press, lecturing, and the gifts of those who admired or loved him. In 1812 Josiah Wedgwood withdrew his half of the annuity which had been granted in 1798; the other half had been secured to Coleridge on the death of Thomas Wedgwood some years before. This part of his income Coleridge had all along devoted to the maintenance of his wife and family. A transient gleam of prosperity fell upon his path in the same year when his drama entitled Remorse (in reality the old play of Osorio rewritten), put upon the stage through the good offices of Byron, proved a decided success, and brought upwards of £400 to the author.

De Quincey, who himself bestowed an anonymous gift of £300 upon Coleridge, has said: "Beyond all men who ever perhaps have lived, [Coleridge] found means to engage a constant succession of most faithful friends. He received the services of sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, from the hands of strangers attracted to him by no possible impulses but those of reverence for his intellect and love for his gracious nature. Perpetual relays were laid along his path of life of zealous and judicious supporters." So it was now; if old friends were

alienated, others took their place. With special devotion did a certain Mr. and Mrs. Morgan tend him during this melancholy time; with them he lived almost continuously from 1810 to 1816; his own home he did not even visit during the last twenty-two years of his life. Amidst so many causes for depression, the chief cause of all, the opium habit, gained an even greater ascendancy. To the misery which this slavery caused, he gives expression in a letter to Cottle, dated April 26th, 1814: "For ten years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but the consciousness of my GUILT worse, far worse than all. I have prayed with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. 'I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?' . . . Had I but a few hundred pounds, but £200—half to send to Mrs. Coleridge, and half to place myself in a private madhouse where I could procure nothing but what a physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time life or death would be determined), there might be hope. Now there is none! O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of madness, only that it is a derangement, an utter impotence of the volition and not of the intellectual faculties. You bid me rouse myself; go bid a man paralytic in both arms to rub them briskly together and that will cure him. 'Alas,' he would reply, 'that I cannot move my arms is my complaint and my misery.'" The plan indicated in this extract Coleridge did have the strength of will to carry out in April 1816. By the advice of a distinguished medical authority he put himself under the care and control of Mr. James Gillman, a surgeon of Highgate. Beneath this physician's roof he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life—broken in health, with a certain weakness of volition, with a dreaminess and vagueness in his processes of thought which precluded him from accomplishing the best results in his intellectual work, yet in comparative and increasing placidity,—busy after his own fashion, producing a certain number of books, and exercising a greater influence, perhaps, by his extraordinary talk, which attracted to him many thoughtful men, especially of the younger generations. One of the young men who visited him was Thomas Carlyle, who gives an extraordinarily vivid, if not very sympathetic, picture of the man and his conversation, which may in part be quoted: "Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke tumult, like a sage escaped from the

inanity of life's battle ; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent ; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a kind of prophetic or magician character. He was thought to hold, he alone in England, the key of German and other Transcendentalisms. || . . . A sublime man ; who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood ; escaping from the black materialisms, and revolutionary deluges, with 'God, Freedom, Immortality' still his ; a king of men. . . . The good man was now getting old, towards sixty, perhaps ; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings ; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration ; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute ; expressive of weakness under the possibility of strength. . . . Nothing could be more copious than his talk ; and furthermore it was always, virtually or literally, of the nature of a monologue ; suffering no interruption, however reverent ; hastily putting aside all foreign additions, annotations, or most ingenuous desires for elucidation, as well-meant superfluities which would never do. Besides, it was talk not flowing any whither like a river, but spreading every whither in inextricable current and regurgitations like a lake or sea ; terribly deficient in definite goal or aim, nay often in logical intelligibility."\* On the other hand, De Quincey in his *Recollections of the Lake Poets*, speaking of Coleridge's conversation, says : "I can assert, upon my long and intimate knowledge of Coleridge's mind, that logic the most severe was as inalienable from his modes of thinking as grammar from his language." Coleridge's later prose works give one the impression that Carlyle was much nearer the truth than De Quincey ; but Carlyle certainly fails to do justice to the interest, originality, and stimulating quality of Coleridge's talk, fully evidenced in the volume of *Table Talk* which was published from notes taken by his nephew. His chief publications of these later years were, in 1817, a collected edition of his poems entitled *Sibylline Leaves* and his *Biographia Literaria*, the most interesting of his prose writings, though desultory and uneven ; the *Aids to*

\* The whole passage from which this is quoted may be read in the eighth chapter of the *Life of Sterling*.

*Reflection* (1825) which is one of the main sources of the Broad Church development in the Church of England ; and *On the Constitution in Church and State*, which is said to have been a factor in the High Church movement. As the last two works indicate, his later interest was largely centred on religious questions ; he had long ceased to be a Unitarian and become a strong adherent and apologist of the National Church. Moreover, he believed himself in possession of an original and far-reaching philosophical system which he was forever striving to embody in what was to be his *magnum opus* ; but, it is probable, here as elsewhere, he mistook vague and disjointed visions for a perfected system. In his later years, pleasant relations were resumed with the members of his own family and with the Wordsworths. In July 1834 his life found a peaceful and not unwelcome close. “A brief dawn of unsurpassed promise and achievement (Mr. Dykes Campbell thus sums up) ; ‘a trouble’ as of ‘clouds and weeping rain’ ; then a long summer evening’s work done by ‘the setting sun’s pathetic light’—such was Coleridge’s day.”

Unique and precious as was Coleridge’s contribution to poetry, higher as his writings in that department rank than anything he produced within the realms of criticism or philosophy, it seems likely that he was by natural endowment rather a thinker than a creative artist. Certain it is, that while poetry was the main pursuit of perhaps not more than a year or two of his life, the search after truth is the one thing that gave a constant unity and hope to his otherwise broken existence. He sought truth, not through the examination of the external world but through books and the interrogation of the mind itself ; he was a metaphysician and an introspective psychologist. His intellect was subtle and analytic. He loved, like a scholastic philosopher, to make endless subdivisions and minute distinctions, and to discover or invent the apt word to designate them. In his very acuteness and many-sidedness there was weakness ; these qualities continually led him off upon ramifications of his ideas, now in this direction, now in that ; and this, in combination with his innate infirmity of purpose, gave rise to a persistent discursiveness which prevented him attaining to any clear fundamental principles either in philosophy or criticism. His ardent disciple, Mr. J. H. Green, laboured in vain for some thirty years to decipher from the mass of Coleridge’s manuscripts the philosophical conceptions that were to give unity to his thought ; and the ordinary student does not need to go further than the *Biographia Literaria* to see how incomplete, disjointed and promis-

cuous was the thinking of Coleridge. Yet these weaknesses did not prevent him throwing off brilliant, suggestive and stimulating ideas. It is upon such fragmentary work that Coleridge's high reputation as a literary critic mainly rests; upon the pencilled jottings on the margins of his Shakespeare or other books, rather than upon any general principles of criticism that he enunciated. If, however, he did not enunciate, he exemplified in criticism a new method and spirit. The criticism of the 18th century, of which Samuel Johnson is the greatest exponent, set up an absolute standard and one which had to do mainly with qualities that appeal to the reasoning powers; by the correspondence of any work with this standard praise or condemnation was meted out. Coleridge is the first and the greatest English critic who attempted to judge each work on its own basis, by considering whether it attained that at which it aimed, and who made allowance for its effect upon the whole nature of the reader—upon his feelings as well as upon his reason. This is the method of the 19th century,—the inevitable method of a time which looks at all things from the point of view of development, of history and environment.

Such a type of mind and such pursuits are likely to be very unfavourable to the production of poetry, which deals not with abstractions but with the concrete, not with ideas but with actual experience; and it is not improbable that, even apart from the effects of opium, Coleridge's critical, analytic, and abstract activities would in any case have paralyzed his poetic productiveness. The amazing thing is not that a man with such tastes and pursuits should write little poetry, but that he should write any. Yet it is not difficult to see the connection between the sort of poetry that he *did* produce, and the characteristics of the man and thinker. His successful poems falls into two classes. In the first we have poems of a character similar to *The Lime-tree Bower*, *Frost at Midnight*,\* etc.,—pieces which at the time were decidedly original and novel. Wordsworth enlarged the bounds of poetry by boldly annexing themes that treated of the familiar persons and things of commonplace life; the excellence of poetry, he felt, did not depend upon the extraordinary or dignified character of the subject presented, but upon the light and emotion with which the poet clothed them,—*i.e.*, upon imaginative power. In a similar yet different fashion Coleridge extended the limits of poetry by giving a picture of familiar and inartificial trains of mingled thought and feeling that passed through his own mind—not because these were remarkable, but because they were

\*This poem is to be found in the *Appendix*.

human ; and because, since to him they were beautiful and interesting, they would probably find a responsive chord in the souls of his fellow men. These pieces, somewhat lacking in form,—in development and unity, are best designated by a word which their author freely employed in the first edition,—*effusions*, spontaneous outpourings under the influence of emotion. Or they may be called *reveries*, the reveries of the introspective thinker prone to dwell reflectively upon the processes of his own mind. “The poet in these effusions, places himself in some environment of beauty, submits his mind to the suggestions of the time and place, falls as it were of free will into a reverie, in which the thoughts and images meander stream-like at their own pleasure, or rather as if the power of volition were suspended and the current must needs follow the line of least resistance ; then, as if by good luck, comes the culmination or some soft subsidence and the poem ceases.”\*

Closely akin to these effusions are the one or two odes in which the poet, rousing himself with an energy unusual with him, deliberately gives a larger measure of artistic form to his thoughts and feelings : finds beginning, middle and close for his theme, and reflects the developed character of his thought, in the elaborated metrical form which he adopts. In all the characteristics which we specially connect with the ode,—in dignity of theme and structure, in development and artistic unity of thought, in emotional quality, in beauty, elaboration and sweep of metrical form, one ode at least, that entitled *France*, is unsurpassed in the language.

The second class of poems is that which includes *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Here we have no longer reverie, but dream. This is the objective, as the other class is the subjective, part of Coleridge’s work ; but these poems are scarcely objective as representing the external world. We have seen that Coleridge’s interest and familiarity was with abstractions, not the concrete realities of life. He was, as Swinburne says, like the footless Bird of Paradise “ who have only wings to sustain them, and live their lives out in a perpetual flight through the clearest air of heaven. Coleridge was the reverse of Antæus ; the contact of earth took all the strength out of him.” The objective world of his poetry is not therefore human life, but the visions which, for this prince of dreamers, had such reality and beauty that he can impart them as permanent sources of delight to others.

Of one sort of reality however, as is fully exemplified in both classes of poems, Coleridge does have firm hold—natural beauty. Though he

\* Dowden, *New Studies in Literature*, pp. 331-2.

does not make so much of nature, is not so widely familiar with her as is Wordsworth, yet when he does fix his eye upon her, he even surpasses Wordsworth in the minuteness and accuracy of his perceptions, "a singular watchfulness for the minute fact and expression of natural scenery, pervading all he writes." From this source he gives background and picturesque beauty to his psychological effusions; and contrast, reality, and relief to his romantic dreams.

Finally, Coleridge possessed the gift of imagination and the mastery of poetic technique: the power (no doubt within a limited sphere) of seeing things in an atmosphere of beauty, finding in them freshness and interest and charm; and, secondly, the power of embodying these perceptions in exquisitely musical combinations of sounds, in apt and beautiful diction and imagery. These are the essential gifts of the poet. So that if the dominant tendencies of Coleridge's mind and the habits of his life seem unfavourable to, nay, almost inconsistent with, poetic work, he yet possessed in extraordinarily high measure the mastery of poetic technique, that which differentiates the poets, who are always few, from the many who are abundantly gifted with poetic sense and feeling. In *Kubla Khan*, which he says was composed in a dream, we find more, perhaps, than in any other poem in our literature, pure poetry without anything else,—i.e., without the intellectual substance,—the ideas, the representation of life,—and without the grandeur and intensity of emotion which almost universally form so large a part of the highest poetry. It is the comparative lack in Coleridge's work (strange in a philosophic thinker) of this substantial foundation of reality, that makes such a poem as *The Ancient Mariner* a puzzle to many readers; it is the presence of imagination, of beauty, of technical excellence in it that kindles poetic spirits like Swinburne to what seems terms of extravagant eulogy: "Of his best verses I venture to affirm that the world has nothing like them, and can never have; that they are of the highest kind and of their own. The highest lyric work is either passionate or imaginative; of passion Coleridge has nothing; but for height and perfection of imaginative quality he is the greatest of lyric poets."

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.**—Of biographies the most accurate and fullest (though extremely condensed) is by J. Dykes Campbell (Macmillan & Co.), the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* by Leslie Stephen gives the facts; sketches of a more popular character by H. D. Traill and Hall Caine in *Men of Letters* and *Great Writers* series respectively; Prof. Brandl's *Coleridge and the English Romantic School* is translated into

English and published by John Murray, 1877 ; two interesting volumes of *Letters* have been collected by a grandson of Coleridge and are published by Macmillan. The completest edition of Coleridge's works is published in 7 vols. by Harper's, N. Y.; his more interesting prose writings, his criticism, etc., are edited by T. Ashe in convenient form, published by Geo. Bell & Sons ; the poetical works are published by Macmillan in 4 vols., but better suited to the student is the one vol. edition edited by Mr. Dykes Campbell and also published by Macmillan. Of essays on Coleridge and his work the following may be mentioned : by Walter Pater in *Ward's English Poets* ; by Mr. Swinburne in his *Essays and Studies* ; by Mr. Leslie Stephen in *Hours in a Library* ; by Prof. Dowden in *New Studies in Literature* ; by J. S. Mill in *Dissertations and Discussions* ; by Rev. Stopford Brooke in *The Golden Book of Coleridge* ; by Dr. Garnett in *Essays of an Ex-Librarian*.

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### THE ANCIENT MARINER.

**Text.**—First published anonymously in *Lyrical Ballads*, September, 1798 ; various changes were made in the text of this poem in the second edition (1800) of the *Lyrical Ballads* ; and again when it was for the first time published among Coleridge's own poems in *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817. In other editions than those mentioned the alterations are few and insignificant. These various readings, with the exception of very minor ones, are given in the following notes ; it will be observed that a large number of them are made with the aim of getting rid of excessive grotesqueness and needless archaisms.

**Composition.**—Wordsworth, in 1843, dictated to Miss Fenwick the following account of the origin of this poem : “In the autumn of 1797 he [Coleridge], my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it ; and, as our united funds were very small, we agreed to pay the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the ‘New Monthly Magazine,’ set up by Phillips, the bookseller, and edited by Dr. Aikin. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet ; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the *Ancient Mariner*, founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention ; but certain parts I myself suggested ; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the

Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime, and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvock's Voyages, a day or two before, that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet: 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous after-thought. We began the composition together, on that to me memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular :

'And listen'd like a three years' child,  
The Mariner had his will.'

These trifling contributions—all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded, slipped out of his mind, as they well might. As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different, that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog." Such are the concrete facts; in his *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xiv, Coleridge, characteristically, gives the philosophical side of the inception of the poem:—"During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of Nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of Nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and the agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would

naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life ; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

“ In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic ; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us ; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

“ With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth’s industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems, written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published.” In Dorothy Wordsworth’s Journal (p. 14) it is stated that Coleridge ‘brought his ballad [*The Ancient Mariner*] finished’ on March 23rd, 1798.

**Sources.**—The beauty and power of *The Ancient Mariner* are wholly due to Coleridge himself, but it is not uninteresting to note where he got suggestions for the material which he has so exquisitely woven into a unity. If we can trust Wordsworth’s memory, the germ was a dream of a neighbour, Mr. Cruikshank. The idea of the albatross was suggested by Wordsworth from Shelvokee’s *Voyages* (see extract from this book

on note to l. 63 below); this fact is emphasized in a statement made to the Rev. A. Dyce: [The idea of] "shooting an albatross was mine; for I had been reading Shelvoke's *Voyages*, which probably Coleridge never saw." It is probable that Coleridge obtained various hints from another account of a voyage by a certain Captain Thomas James which was published in 1633: *Strange and Dangerous Voyage . . . in his intended Discovery of the North-West Passage into the South Sea*. The following passages from this book are quoted in Mr. Dykes Campbell's notes as most likely to have given suggestions to the poet: 'All day and night, it snowed hard' (p. 11); 'The nights are very cold, so that our rigging freezes' (p. 15); 'It proved very thicke foule weather, and the next day by two a Clocke in the morning we found ourselves incompassed about with Ice' (p. 6); 'We had Ice not farre off about us, and some pieces as high as our Top-mast-head' (p. 7); 'We heard . . . the butt against a banke of Ice that lay on the shoare. It made a hollow and hideous noyse, like an over-fall of water, which made us reason among ourselves concerning it, for we were not able to see about us, it being darke night and foggie' (p. 8); 'The Ice . . . crackt all over the Bay, with a fearfull noyse' (p. 77). Finally, in a letter of a certain Paulinus, Bishop of Nola in the Fourth century (which it is quite possible Coleridge may have read), there is a narrative of a shipwreck of which an old man is the sole survivor; the ship was navigated by a crew of angels to the Lucanian shore, where the fishermen, taking the angels for soldiers, ran away from the ship until recalled by the old man, who showed them he was alone.

So much for the material: the form and general conception of the poem were derived from the old ballads familiar to Coleridge in the collection which had been published by Bishop Percy in 1765, entitled *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. To enable the student to see for himself from what sort of basis Coleridge worked in the matter of form, there are inserted in the *Appendix* to this volume two narrative ballads from Percy's collection. The first, *Sir Patrick Spence*, is one of the finest of these—"the grand old ballad" as it is called by Coleridge himself in his *Dejection*; the second, *Sir Cauline*, seems most to resemble *The Ancient Mariner* in its general form;\* and several details of language or expression common to it and the earliest edition of *The Ancient*

\* In his introduction to this Ballad the editor remarks: "There is something peculiar in the metre of this old ballad; it is not unusual to meet with redundant stanzas of six lines; but the occasional insertion as a double third or fourth line, as ver. 31, 44, etc., is an irregularity I do not remember to have seen elsewhere." This is a device freely adopted by Coleridge.

*Mariner* are indicative that this ballad was specially present in the poet's mind. Other antique phrases which give colour to Coleridge's ballad are evidently drawn not merely from Percy's volume, but from Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and other earlier authors with whom Coleridge was familiar.

The title of the poem in the first edition, 1798, was "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; in the ed. of 1800 it became "The Ancient Mariner, A Poet's Reverie." To the addition Lamb objects in a letter to Wordsworth: "I am sorry Coleridge has christened his *Ancient Mariner*, "A Poet's Reverie"; it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical representation of a lion. What new idea is gained by this title, but one subversion of all credit—which the tale should force upon us—of its truth!" In 1817 the original title was restored without the antique spelling; this latter change was in harmony with that abandonment of needless archaisms which characterized the edition of 1800 and subsequent editions.

**Rime.**—This use of the word "rime" (the proper form of the word commonly spelt "rhyme") in the sense of a poem is common in earlier English, e.g., Chaucer, *Prologue to Sir Thopas*:

For other tale certes can I noon,  
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.

**Ancient** is used sometimes in the sense of 'aged,' e.g., Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 76: "The year growing ancient;" the word as used here is doubtless also intended (as Dr. Sykes notes in his edition of this poem) to suggest not merely that the Mariner was aged, but also that he belonged to the olden times.

In the first edition there was prefixed to the poem the following *argument*:

"How a ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the Tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Aneyent Marinere came back to his own Country."

In 1800 this was somewhat changed:

"How a Ship having first sailed to the Equator, was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; how the Ancient Mariner, cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed a Sea-bird; and how he was followed by many strange Judgements; and in what manner he came back to his own Country."

In the edition of 1817 the *argument* is omitted, its function being filled by the marginal *Gloss* which now appears for the first time, as

does also the Latin motto quoted from the *Archæologie Philosophicæ* of Thomas Burnet, a master of the Charterhouse School and a chaplain to William III. The work quoted professes to be a philosophical account of the origin of the world based upon the narrative in *Genesis*. The following is a translation :

I can easily believe that there are more invisible than visible beings in the universe. But who shall describe to us the vast family of these, their ranks, relationships, differences and special gifts? What business employs them? What are their dwelling-places? Human wit has ever striven towards a knowledge of these things, but it has never attained thereto. I will own, notwithstanding, that it is profitable sometimes to contemplate in the mind, as in a picture, the image of the greater and better world, lest the soul, accustomed to the trifles of our present life, should be narrowed overmuch, and altogether sink to paltry cogitations. But, meanwhile, we must be vigilant to keep to the truth and to observe moderation that we distinguish things certain from things uncertain, day from night.

The **Gloss** in the margin should not be overlooked; it sometimes throws light upon the narrative and is, as Pater says, "a composition of quite a different shade of beauty and merit from that of the verse which it accompanies, connecting this, the chief poem of Coleridge, with his philosophy, and emphasizing in it that psychological element of which I have spoken, its curious soul-lore."

1. The opening is in the manner of several ancient ballads, e.g., *The Friar of Orders Gray* (*Percy's Reliques*) :

It was a friar of orders gray  
Walkt forth to tell his beades.

and *The Beggar's Daughter* (*Percy's Reliques*) :

It was a blind beggar, had long lost his sight.

3. Strange oaths are characteristic of mediæval times; in the *Tale of Gamelyn*, formerly ascribed to Chaucer, the porter swears "by Goddes berde"; that swearing by the beard was not uncommon, seems to be indicated by Touchstone's words to the ladies in *As You Like It*, I, ii :

Swear by your beards that I am a knave.

4. In earlier editions

Now wherefore stoppest me?

3. In the earlier editions the following two stanzas occupied the place of ll. 9-12 :

But still he holds the wedding guest—  
There was a Ship, quoth he—  
'Nay, if thou'st got a laughsome tale,  
Marinere! come with me.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
 Quoth he, there was a Ship—  
 'Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon  
 Or my staff shall make thee skip.'

11. **loon.** 'A base fellow'; cf. *Macbeth*, V, iii, "The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon"; Percy's *Reliques*, *The Heir of Linne*, l. 75, "Another called him thriftless loone." It appears in the form 'lown' in *Othello*, II, iii, as also in Lowland Scotch: see Burns, who spells the word "loun."

12. **eftsoons.** 'Forthwith'; an obsolete word which gives a poetic flavour; frequently found in Spenser, e.g., *Faerie Queen*, I, xi, 47: "Whereof whoso did eat, eftsoones did know Both good and ill." And in earlier writers, e.g., *St. George for England*, l. 299 (Percy's *Reliques*), "The stout St. George eftsoon, he made the dragon follow."

15-16. These lines are by Wordsworth.

20. **Mariner.** The spelling of the edition of 1798 'Marinerē' represented a more antiquated pronunciation which would make the rhyme more perfect. See l. 517.

21. Note here and repeatedly through the poem *internal rhyme*; cf., in *Appendix, Sir Cauline*, Pt. I, l. 61, l. 106.

23. **kirk.** The representative in the Northern dialects of the A.S. *cyric*; as 'church' is the development of the same A.S. word in the South. Percy says in the *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels* prefixed to his *Reliques*: "I cannot conclude the account of the ancient English Minstrels, without remarking that they are most of them represented to have been of the North of England. There is scarce an old historical song or ballad wherein a minstrel or harper appears, but he is characterized, by way of eminence, to have been 'of the North Countree': and indeed the prevalence of the northern dialect in such compositions shows that this representation is real."

32. **bassoon.** A musical instrument of the reed species; from Ital. *bassone*, an augmentative from *basso*, bass.

33. Cf. *Sir Cauline*, Pt. I, ll. 75-6:

The lady is gone to her own chaumbēr,  
 Her maydens following bright.

41-54. This passage is represented in the edition of 1798 by the following:—

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,  
 A Wind and Tempest strong!  
 For days and weeks it play'd us freaks—  
 Like Chaff we drove along.

Listen, Stranger ! Mist and Snow  
 And it grew wond'rous cauld :  
 And Ice mast-high came floating by  
 As green as Emerauld.

In the edition of 1800 this was altered to

But now the Northwind came more fierce,  
 There came a Tempest strong  
 And Southward still for days and weeks—  
 Like Chaff we drove along.

And now there came both Mist and Snow  
 And it grew wondrous cold.

41. **drawn** (*in the Gloss*). “I have ventured to take the liberty of altering *drawn* into *driven*. As a matter of fact the ship was *driven*, not ‘*drawn*’ along. . . . Coleridge, I have no doubt, wrote *driven*, but in very small characters on the narrow margin of the Lyrical Ballads; the word was misprinted *drawn*.” (*Note by Dykes Campbell*.)

45-50. For form of stanza, cf. *Sir Cauline*, Pt. I., ll. 80-85.

46. **who** was originally an interrogative, but is found as an indefinite in later English (see Abbot’s *Shakespearian Grammar*, § 257, Emerson’s *English Language*, pp. 207-8): “Who steals my purse, steals trash,” *Othello*, III, iii; “And I will set this foot of mine as far As who goes farthest,” *Julius Caesar*, I, iii.

47. **still.** ‘Continually,’ ‘ever’; cf. *Tempest*, I, ii, “The still-vexed Bermoothes,” *Mids. Night’s Dream*, III, i, “The summer still doth tend upon my state.”

51-62. Cf. quotations from Captain James’ *Voyage*, p. 95, above.

55. **clifts.** ‘Cliffs.’ The *New English Dictionary* quotes this passage under the head of ‘clift’ a form of ‘cleft’ a fissure; but the same authority states that ‘clift’ is also a by-form of ‘cliff’ due to confusion between that word and ‘clift’ a fissure, and is commonly found from 16th to the 18th century; it quotes from Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* and *Robinson Crusoe*, I, iii. See also *Isaiah*, lvii, 5: “Slaying the children in the valleys under clifts of the rocks.”

56. **sheen.** Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 167: “And thirty dozen moons with borrow’d sheen ;” cf. note on l. 314.

57. In 1798

Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken.

**ken.** Usually ‘know,’ but here ‘perceive’; cf. Hakluyt’s *Voyages*: “After many days they kenned land afar off,” and Spenser’s *Faerie Queen*, I, xii, 1 :

Vere the main sheet, and bear up with the land  
 The which afar is fairely to be kenn'd  
 And seemeth safe from storms that may offend.

So *Paradise Lost*, XI, 396 :

Nor could his eyes not ken  
 The empire of Negus.

62. So the line stood (with the exception of *of* for *in*) in 1798 ; in 1800 it read

A wild and ceaseless sound.

Subsequently Coleridge restored the line as in the text.

**swound.** Archaic and provincial for 'swoon' ; cf. *Sir Cauline*, Pt. II, ll. 171-4 :

But he for pain and lacke of bloud  
 Was fallen intò a swounde,  
 And there all waltering in his gore,  
 Lay lifeless on the grounde.

and Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, 1,485, fol :

Lo, here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,  
 Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swounds,  
 Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies  
 And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds.

The insertion of *d* exemplifies a common tendency ; cf. 'sound' (Fr. *son*) ; 'bound,' prepared (Middle Eng. *bonne*) ; 'round,' to whisper (from *runian*), and such vulgarisms as 'gownd' for 'gown.'

63. **Albatross.** "The common albatross is the largest of web-footed birds, measuring four feet in length and ten to seventeen feet in spread of wings. It is often seen at a great distance from land, and abounds in the southern seas ; often approaches very near vessels and follows for a considerable time." (*Chamber's Encyclopædia*.) The use which the poet makes of the bird was probably suggested by a passage in Shelvoke's *Voyage round the World*: "One would think it impossible that anything living could subsist in so rigid a climate [neighbourhood of Cape Horn] ; and indeed, we all observed, that we had not the sight of one fish since we were come to the Southward of the streights of *le Mair*, not one sea-bird, except a disconsolate black *Albitross*, who accompanied us for several days, hovering about us as if lost himself, till Hatley (my second Captain) observing, in one of his melancholy fits, that the bird was always hovering near us, imagined from his colour that it might be some ill omen. That which, I suppose, induced him the more to incourage his superstition was the continued series of contrary, tempestuous winds which had oppressed us ever since we had

got into this sea. But be that as it would, after some fruitless attempts, at length, shot the *Albitross*, not doubting (perhaps) that we should have a fair wind after it."

64. **Thorough** and 'through' are variants of the same word and originally employed indifferently, but in course of time each has been assigned a function of its own. (This is a common phenomenon in language, cf. 'antic' and 'antique'; 'metal' and 'mettle'.) For similar use of 'thorough' where 'through' would ordinarily be employed in modern English see Wordsworth's *To the Daisy*, l. 8, also *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, 250 (Gummere's *Old English Ballads*).

'By dere worthy God,' sayd Robin,  
'To seche all England thorowe,  
Yet found I never to my pay  
A moche better borowe.'

65. In the earlier editions (*i.e.*, before 1817) "And an it were," etc.

67. In the earlier editions

The Marineres gave it biscuit-worms.

69. **thunder-fit.** "Fit," a paroxysm in a disease, hence transferred (as here) to any sudden, violent and transitory activity.

76. **vespers.** Commonly "evening prayers" (cf. ll. 595-6 of this poem), but here in its etymological sense 'evenings'; cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV, xiv, "they are black vesper's pageants,"—the only occasion on which Shakespeare uses the word.

## PART II.

83-86. In the earlier editions

The sea came up upon the right,  
Out of the Sea came he;  
And broad as a weft upon the left  
Went down into the Sea

83. The change in direction of the ship may have been suggested by the doubling of Cape Horn in Shelvoke's *Voyages*.

91. The use of 'and' at the beginning of sentences, and its frequent repetition are characteristic of the old ballads, as of all simple and naïve writing; cf. children's compositions.

92. 'em for **hem**, originally dative plural of the third personal pronoun of which 'the,' 'his,' 'her,' and 'it' are survivals.

95-96. These two lines are not in the ed. 1798. Repetition is another characteristic of the simple and naïve style of the ballad; cf. *Sir Patrick Spence*.

97. In ed. of 1802 "like an angel's head."

98. *uprist*. Used here as past tense of *uprise*; but properly the 3rd sing. pres. indic., as in Chaucer's *Compleynt of Mars*, l. 4: "For when the sonne uprist, then wol ye sprede." But Chaucer also uses it as a past, *e.g.*, *Reve's Tale*, l. 329.

103. In the earlier editions "The breezes blew."

104. "In *Sibylline Leaves* [1817] the line was printed,  
The furrow streamed off free.

And Coleridge put this footnote: 'In the former edition the line was,  
The furrow follow'd free.

But I had not been long on board a ship before I perceived that this was the image as seen by a spectator from the shore, or from another vessel. From the ship itself the *wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern.' But in 1828 and after, the old line was restored." (*Dykes Campbell*.)

111. **All.** An intensive adverb to the phrase which follows; cf. *A Gest of Robyn Hode* (Gummere's *Old English Ballads*), 291, "All by the butte he stood," and 322

Forth he yede to London towne  
All for to tell our kinge,

and Gay's *Black-eyed Susan*, "All in the Downs the fleet was moored." **copper.** Refers to colour.

112-113. This indicates that they had reached the tropics.

117-118. **painted.** Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii :

his sword  
. . . . seem'd i' the air to stick :  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood.

123-126. Dr. Sykes quotes: "During a calm . . . . some parts of the sea seemed covered with a kind of slime: and some small sea animals were swimming about. The most conspicuous of which were of the gelatinous, or *medusa* kind, almost globular; and another sort smaller, that had a white, or shining appearance, and were very numerous. Some of these last were taken up, and put into a glass cup, with some salt water, in which they appeared like small scales, or bits of silver, when at rest. . . . When they began to swim about, . . . . they emitted the brightest colours of the most precious gems, according to their position with respect to the light. Sometimes they appeared quite pellucid, at other times assuming various tints of

blue, from a pale sapphirine, to a deep violet colour, which were frequently mixed with a ruby or opaline redness, and glowed with a strength sufficient to illuminate the vessel and water. These colours appeared most vivid, when the glass was held to a strong light ; and mostly vanished, on the subsiding of the animals to the bottom, when they had a brownish cast. But, with candle light, the colour was, chiefly, a beautiful, pale green, tinged with a burnished gloss ; and, in the dark, it had a faint appearance of glowing fire.”—*A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean . . . by Captain James Cook. Lond., 1784, vol. ii, p. 257 : bk. iii, ch. 13.*

123. In the earlier editions “The very deeps.”

127. **rout.** A company or troop, with the associated idea, perhaps, of tumult and disorder ; cf. *Adam Bell (Percy's Reliques)*, ll. 87-8 :

She was ware of the justice and shirife both,  
Wyth a full great route.

128. **death-fires.** Luminous appearances supposed to be seen above dead bodies. In the *New English Dictionary* this is the earliest example of the word quoted.

133. **gloss.** The references to authorities are inserted to give a mediæval colour. *Josephus*, the well-known Jewish historian (lived in the first century A. D.), does not specially treat of spirits or angels, but *Michael Psellus*, a philosopher of Constantinople who lived in the 11th century, wrote concerning spirits in his *περὶ ἐνεργείας δαιμόνων διάλογος*.

139. **well a-day.** Supposed corruption of the old interjection “Wel-away” which, in turn, comes from “wā lā wā,” i.e., woe lo woe ; common in earlier literature, e.g., in *Percy's Reliques, Adam Bell*, III, l. 7-8 :

For nowe is my dear husband slayne,  
Alas ! and wel-a-way !

and *The Heir of Linne*, ll. 65-6 :

“Nowe well-aday,” sayd the heire of Linne,  
“Nowe well-aday, and woe is me !”

### PART III.

143-148. In 1798 this Part opens with

I saw a something in the Sky  
No bigger than my fist ;  
At first it seem'd a little speck, etc.

In 1800 :

So past a weary time ; each throat  
Was parch'd and glaz'd each eye,  
When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

The reading in the text first appears in 1817.

152. **I wist.** This phrase has probably arisen from confusion of the old adverb 'gewiss,' later form 'ywiss' or 'i-wiss,' meaning 'certainly,' with the verb 'witan' to know, present tense 'wat,' preterit 'wiste.' (See Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*.) 'I wiss' is a common form in ballads ; cf. Percy's *Reliques, Sir Aldingar*, ll. 48-9 :

Forth then hyed our king, I wysse,  
And an angry man was he,

so in *Sir Cauline* (see *Appendix*) I, 151, II, 13.

155. **water-sprite** for water-spirit.

159. In the earlier editions

Then while thro' drouth, all dumb they stood.

164. **Gramercy** in accordance with its etymology (O. Fr. *grant merci*, great thanks) means 'thanks,' and in this sense is common in old ballads, e.g., in Percy's *Reliques, The Tanner of Tamworth*, l. 41 :

Gramercy for nothing, the tanner replyde,

and *Adam Bell*, ll. 129-130 :

The queene was a glad woman,  
And sayde, 'Lord, gramercy.'

In regard to the use which Coleridge makes of it in the text (as an exclamation = 'mercy on us') the *New English Dictionary* says : "Johnson, 1755, who regards this word as a shortened form of *grant me mercy* gives this as the only application of the word ; but both his examples belong to the sense ['thanks']. " The *Dictionary* states that (while there are one or two cases which might seem to show that the word was actually used as Johnson says) the later cases (in Coleridge, Scott, etc.) may be merely based on Johnson's interpretation.

164. **they for joy did grin.** "I took the thought of 'grinning for joy' from my companion's remark to me, when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon, and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak, from the constriction, till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me 'You grinned like an idiot!' He had done the same." (*Coleridge's Table Talk, May 31st, 1830.*)

167. fol.; cf. Scott, *Rokeby* II, xi :

that Phantom Ship whose form  
Shoots like a meteor through the storm.

In his note Scott says that this is an allusion to "a well known nautical superstition." For literary use of the same idea cf. Marryat's novel *The Phantom Ship* and Longfellow's *Ballad of Carmilhan* (*Tales of a Wayside Inn*).

167-169. In the earlier editions

She doth not tack from side to side—  
Hither to work us weal ;  
Withouten wind, withouten tide.

184. **gossameres.** Filmy substances spun by small spiders floating in the air or spread over a grassy surface. According to the *New English Dictionary* the etymology is 'goose summer,' possibly meaning later summer when the geese fly, during which time their films are most abundant. Mr. Hutchinson in his edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* has the following note on this line: "One of the few images borrowed from the Nether Stowey surroundings. 'The surface of the [Quantock] heath restless and glittering with the waving of the spider's threads . . . miles of grass, light and glittering and the insects passing' (Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, February 8, 1798)."

185-215. This passage exhibits many changes from the text of 1798. which is here quoted *in extenso* :

Are those *her* naked ribs, which fleck'd  
The sun that did behind them peer?  
And are those two all, all the crew,  
That woman and her fleshless Pheere?

*His* bones were black with many a crack,  
All black and bare, I ween ;  
Jet black and bare, save where the rust  
Of mouldy damps and charnel crust  
They're patch'd with purple and green.

*Her* lips are red, her looks are free,  
*Her* locks are yellow and gold :  
Her skin is as white as leprosy,  
And she is far liker Death than he ;  
Her flesh makes the still air cold

The naked Hulk alongside came  
And the Twain were playing dice ;  
"The Game is done ! I've won, I've won."  
Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

A gust of wind sterte up behind  
 And whistled thro' his bones ;  
 Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth  
 Half whistles and half groans.

With never a whisper in the Sea  
 Off darts the Spectre-ship :  
 While clombe above the Eastern bar  
 The horned Moon, with one bright Star  
 Almost atween the tips.

One after one by the horned Moon  
 (Listen, O Stranger ! to me)  
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang  
 And curs'd me with his ee.

In 1800 the first of these stanzas was changed to

Are those her Ribs, thro' which the Sun  
 Did peer, as thro' a grate.  
 And are those two all, all her crew,  
 That woman and her Mate.

and immediately after this stanza in a copy of the 1798 edition, there is inserted, in the Poet's handwriting, the following :

This Ship it was a plankless thing,  
 A bare Anatomy !  
 A plankless Spectre—and it moved  
 Like a Being of the Sea !  
 The woman and a fleshless man  
 Therein sat merrily.

188. **a Death.** An embodiment of death in the form of a skeleton ; cf. *Merchant of Venice*, II, viii, 63 :

What have we here ?  
 A carrion death within whose empty eye  
 There is a written scroll.

190-4. “Is it fanciful to regard the description of the Spectre-Woman Life-in-Death as modelled on that of Ydelness in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, ll. 539-644—the section immediately preceding *The Garden* (ll. 645-728), where Coleridge found *lavrock*, *jargoning*, and the *angel's song* (see ll. 671-2) :

His heer was as yelowe of hewe  
 As any basin scoured newe. . . . .  
 His face whyt and wel coloured. . . . .  
 His throte, al-so whyt of hewe  
 As snow on braunche snowed newe.”  
 (Mr. Hutchins's note in his Reprint of *Lyrical Ballads*.)

193. **Night-mare** is originally a spirit that oppresses people in sleep ; cf. *King Lear*, III, iv :

St. Withold footed thrice the wold  
He met the Nightmare and her nine-fold.

197. Dr. Sykes prints this line "I've, I've won." "So," he says, "in 1817, 1829, 1835. The editions 1798-1805 read

The game is done ! I've won, I've won !

It is therefore quite certain that the more usual reading, depending only on the early editions, 1798-1805, is not what Coleridge finally approved. The reading 'I've, I've won' has, moreover, the merit of throwing the accent where it rhetorically belongs." The latter argument scarcely holds ; it is not natural for a speaker to emphasize the fact that *he*, and not another, has won by saying 'I've.' The line is, further, very clumsy. The probable explanation is that the variant is simply a repeated misprint. Mr. Gibbs seems to be the only other editor who adopts it.

198. Sailors have superstitions in regard to whistling, as is shown by the well-known recipe of whistling in order to bring a wind ; Scott in *Rokeby*, II, xi, speaks of

How whistle rash, bids tempest roar.

Dr. Sykes quotes from Dr. Pegge in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1763 : "Our sailors, I am told, at this very day (I mean the vulgar sort) have a strange opinion of the devil's power and agency in stirring up winds, and that is the reason they so seldom whistle on shipboard, esteeming it to be a mockery, and consequently an enraging of the devil."

201-210. "Among some papers of Coleridge dated variously from 1806, 1807, and 1810, there exists undated, the following recasts of these lines :—

With never a whisper on the main  
Off shot the spectre ship :  
And stifled words and groans of pain  
Mix'd on each murmuring lip.

And we look'd round, and we look'd up,  
And fear at our heart, as at a cup,  
The Life-blood seem'd to sip—  
The sky was dull, and dark the night,  
The helmsman's face by his lamp gleam'd bright  
From the sails the dews did drip—  
Till climb above the Eastern Bar  
The horned moon, with one bright star  
Within its nether tip."

(Dykes Campbell's Note.)

209. **clomb.** An archaism ; the common form in earlier English ; cf. Chaucer's *House of Fame*, 1,118 : "But up I clomb with alle pain," and frequent in later poets, e.g., *Paradise Lost*, IV, 192 : "So clomb the first grand Thief into God's fold."

210-212. "It is a common superstition among sailors that something evil is about to happen whenever a star dogs the moon." (*Coleridge's MS. Note.*) But of course, a star is never seen *within* the tip of the moon.

212-215. In the earlier edition

One after one by the horned Moon,  
(Listen, O Stranger ! to me)  
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang,  
And curs'd me with his ee.

#### PART IV.

226-227. "For the last two lines of this stanza I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned, and in part composed." (*Coleridge's note in the edition of 1817.*)

Dr. Sykes quoted from the ballad of *Lord Soulis in the Border Minstrelsy* :

Blibbed like the sand at mark of sea.

234. In the earlier editions this line reads

And Christ would take no pity on.

238. In the earlier editions

And a million million slimy things.

242. **rotting.** In the earlier editions "eldritch."

245. **or ever.** 'Or' is often used in earlier English where we would employ 'before' ; cf. *Adam Bell* (Percy's *Reliques*), l. 72 : "Thy meed thou shalt have ore thou go." "The use of 'or' for *ere* is not uncommon, both from A. S. *ær* before. It is probable *or ere* arose as a reduplicate expression in which *ere* repeats and explains *or* ; later this was confounded with *or e'er* ; hence *or ever*." (*Skeat.*) Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 183 :

Would I had met my dearest foe in Heaven  
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio !

and *Eccles.* xii, ii : "or ever the silver cōrd be loosed."

249. **And.** Earlier editions have "till."

254. **reek.** Properly to emit vapour ; the reference here is rather to smell ; cf. Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, III, iii, 121 : " Whose breath I hate as reek o' the rotten fens ;" *Merry Wives of Windsor*, III, iii, 86 : " As hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln."

260. **gloss.** Stopford Brooke draws attention to Coleridge's gloss here : " It is characteristic of the quaint phantasy which belonged to his nature that he puts the thoughts which lift the whole scene into the realm of the imagination into the prose gloss at the side—and it is perhaps the loveliest little thought in all his writings."

267. **bemocked.** Because they gave an appearance of coolness.

268. The earlier editions have

Like morning frosts yspread.

274, fol. The reference is to the familiar phenomenon of phosphorescence on the sea caused by the presence of minute organisms. Any one who has crossed the ocean has observed the streams of light that break away from the sides of the vessel as she strikes the waves ; the water-snakes are represented as producing a similar effect. There is a reference to this phenomenon in the *Lines to Wordsworth*, and Coleridge quotes in a note the following passage from *The Friend* : " A beautiful white cloud of foam at momentary intervals coursed by the side of the vessel with a roar, and little stars of flame danced and sparkled and went out in it : and every now and then light detachments of this white cloudlike foam darted off from the vessel's side, each with its own small constellation, over the sea, and scoured out of sight like a Tartar troop over a wilderness."

288-291. **Part IV**, the central portion of the poem, contains the catastrophe, or turning-point, of the story ; this is made to depend on a moral change wrought in the heart of the hero, and this change is represented (in harmony with ideas very prominent in Wordsworth's teaching) as being brought about by the contemplation of the beauty of nature (cf. the gloss at l. 263). Sympathy with animals is a characteristic mark of the tendencies of the time, and is exemplified abundantly in literature ; we find it in the episode of the Ass in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, in Burns (e.g., the *Lines to the Mouse*, and in those *To a Wounded Hare*), in Cowper, as well as in Coleridge's early sonnet *To a Young Ass*, beginning

Innocent Fool ! Thou poor, despised, forlorn,  
I hail thee brother, spite of the fool's scorn.

289. **so free.** A species of phraseology very common in ballads: cf. *Adam Bell* (Percy's *Reliques*), ll. 97-8:

Then spake good Adam Bell  
To Clym of the Clough so free.

and *The Heir of Linne*

There sate three lords upon a rowe  
Were drinking of the wine so free.

So "He maun sell his lands so broad" (ibid, l. 19), "And in it was a key of gold so reddy" (ibid, l. 40).

#### PART V.

292. **silly.** The word meant originally 'happy,' 'blessed,' then 'simple,' hence 'foolish.' Some editors consider it has its original sense here; but, more probably, there is a reference to the uselessness and absurdity of buckets under the conditions described. There is something of this sense in Spenser's *Sonnet, LXIII*, "with which my silly bark was tossed sore."

309. The early editions have

The roaring wind! it roar'd far off.

310. **anear.** This word is employed as so many others to give an antique colouring; it seems however to be rarely, if ever, found in older writers. *Webster's Dictionary* quotes an example of its use as a preposition from Jeremy Taylor: "Much more is needed so that at last the measure of misery anear us may be correctly taken." In *Pericles*, III, Introd. 51, we find an adverbial but not exactly parallel use:

The lady shrieks and well anear  
Doth fall in travail with her fear.

314. **sheen.** Coleridge has already (l. 56) employed this word as a noun. It is much more commonly an adjective, as here; cf. *King Estmere*, ll. 17-18 (Percy's *Reliques*):

King Adland hath a daughter, brother,  
Men call her bright and sheen,

and Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*, l. 317: "Youre blisful suster, Lucina, the sheene," and *Romance of the Rose*, ll. 127-128:

The botme paved every dele  
With gravel, ful of stones shene.

**fire-flags.** This is usually interpreted 'flashes of lightning,' but 'fire-flag' seems a very inappropriate representation of a lightning flash. The *New English Dictionary* gives the meaning "a meteoric

flame," and quotes this passage ; but to the present writer it seems much more likely that the reference is to electric phenomena. At the South pole, as at the North, the aurora appears, and the word *fire-flags*, as well as the whole description in this stanza, is much more appropriately applied to this than to either of the other appearances. In the article in *Chambers' Encyclopaedia* on the aurora, it is said : "The ray seldom keeps the same form for any length of time ; but undergoes continual changes, moving eastward and westward, and *fluttering like a ribbon agitated by the wind.*"

322. The earlier editions have

Hark ! hark ! the thick black cloud is cleft.

327-8. The earlier editions have

The strong wind reach'd the ship : it roar'd  
And dropp'd down like a stone !

337. **'gan.** This word, which is common in earlier poetry, has been erroneously supposed to be an abbreviation of 'began,' hence the apostrophe ; in A.S. the simple form is not found, but the compound 'onginnan' ; the verb 'ginnen' is, however, common in middle English ; cf. Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, l. 682 : "Whan that Arcite hadde songe, he gan to sike." *Adam Bell* (Percy's *Reliques*) Pt. II, ll. 107-8 :

The one hyt the justice, the other the sheryfe,  
That both theyr sides gan blede.

344. In 1798 two additional lines concluded this stanza :

And I quak'd to think of my own voice  
How frightful it would be !

345-349. These lines were not in the earlier editions.

350. In the earlier editions

The day-light dawn'd—they dropp'd their arms.

358-359. Compare Wordsworth's *To a Skylark*, p. 64.

359. **sky-lark.** In the earlier editions "Lavrock,"—a word meaning the same thing, found in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, l. 662, in Scotch and other northern dialects.

The hares were hirplin down the furrs,  
The lav'rocks they were chantin'.

(*Burns' Holy Fair.*)

362. **jargoning.** 'Jargon' in modern usage indicates confused sounds without any suggestion of beauty, but in earlier English it was

applied specially to the chattering of birds ; cf. *Romance of the Rose*, ll. 713-716 :

Ful faire servyse and eke ful swete  
These briddes maden as they sete,  
Layes of love, ful well sowning,  
They songen in hir jargoning.

367, fol. In regard to this and the description in 318 fol. Stopford Brooke says : " In both these descriptions, one of the terror, the other of the softness of Nature, a certain charm, of the source of which we are not at once conscious, is given by the introduction into the lonely sea of images borrowed from the land, but which the sounds to be described at sea : such as the noise of the brook and the sighing of the sedge. We are brought into closer sympathy with the mariner by the subtle suggestion of his longing for the land and its peace. And we ourselves enjoy the travel of thought, swept to and fro without any shock — on account of the fitness of the illustration and thing—from sea to land, from land to sea."

369-370. " Another of the rare images in this poem derived from the Nether Stowey environment. . . . The ' hidden brook ' is the self-same chattering of *The Three Graves* . . . the same of which Coleridge in *The Nightingale* and *The Lime-Tree Bower* and which is described by Wordsworth in the Fenwick note\* to *Lines Written in Early Spring.*" (Hutchinson.)

372. In the edition of 1798, four stanzas, omitted in 1800, follow this line :

Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest !  
' Marinere ! thou hast thy will :  
For that which comes out of thine eye, doth make  
My body and soul to be still.'  
Never sadder tale was told  
To a man of woman born :  
Sadder and wiser than wedding-guest !  
Thou'l rise to-morrow morn.  
  
Never sadder tale was heard  
By a man of woman born :  
The Marineres all return'd to work  
As silent as beforne.

\* Wordsworth's note describes " the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alford through the grounds of Alfoxden. . . . The brook ran down a sloping rock so as to make a waterfall considerable for that country, and across the pool had fallen a tree, an ash, if I rightly remember, from which rose perpendicular boughs in search of the light intercepted by the deep shade above."

The Marineres all 'gan pull the ropes,  
But look at me they n' old;  
Thought I, I am as thin as air—  
They cannot me behold.

In the third to last line "n' old" = ne wold = would not.

383. The spirit from the South pole, which in obedience to the heavenly powers had been moving the ship northward, cannot pass the equator; so that the sun, which at this point is directly overhead, seems to fix the ship to the spot.

394. 'I am not able to declare.'

399. In imitation of the old ballads; cf. *Adam Bell*, Pt. II, ll. 29-30:

"Here commeth none in," sayd the porter,  
"By Hym that dyed on a tre."

and *A Geste of Robyn Hode*. (Gummere's *Old English Ballads*):

The shereſ ſware a ful grete othe  
By him that dyed on rode.

407. **honey-dew.** A sugary substance found on leaves in drops like dew; but it is not so much the thing itself as the suggestiveness of its name which leads the poet to allude to it here and in *Kubla Khan*:

For he on honey-dew hath fed  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Perhaps Coleridge had in mind *Julius Caesar*, II, l. 230, where some editions read "enjoy the heavy honey-dew of slumber," though the better authorized reading is "honey-heavy dew."

## PART VI.

414-417. "Borrowed from Coleridge's own *Osorio*—

'Oh woman!  
I have stood silent like a slave before thee.'

(*Dying speech of Osorio*.)

and half from Sir John Davies, [1569-1626]

'For lo the sea that fleets about the land,  
And like a girdle clips her solid waist,  
Music and measure both doth understand:  
For his great chryſtal eye is always cast  
Up to the moon, and on her fixèd fast.'

*Orchestra; or, A Poem on Dancing.*"

(*Note by Mr. Dykes Campbell.*)

435. **charnel-dungeon.** A 'charnel' is a receptacle for dead bodies (L. *caro, carnis*); cf. Shelley's *Alastor*:

In charnels and on coffins, where black Death  
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee.

but 'charnel-house' is more commonly employed. Frequently the charnel-house was a vault under the church ; so Milton's *Comus*, ll. 471-472 :

Those thick and gloomy shadows damp,  
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres.

442-443. The earlier editions have

And in its time the spell was snapt,  
And I could move my een.

446. **lonesome.** In the earlier editions "lonely."

455. Cf. Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott* :

Little breezes dusk and shiver.

The darkening of water by the breaking of the reflection through a ripple on the surface is an everyday phenomenon.

467. **countree.** The accentuation of the last syllable is archaic (cf. French *contrée*) ; so commonly in ballads, e.g., Percy's *Reliques*, *King Estmere*, ll. 99-102 :

And he took leave of that ladye fayre,  
To goe to his own countree,  
To fetche him dukes and lords and knightes,  
That marryed they might bee.

473. **strewn.** "Outspread (*Sykes*), perhaps rather spread evenly with level light" (*Bates*).

475. **shadow** must mean here 'reflection.'

475. In the edition of 1798 the following stanzas are included at this point ; omitted in 1800 and succeeding editions :

The moonlight bay was white all o'er,  
Till rising from the same,  
Full many shapes that shadows were,  
Like as of torches came.

A little distance from the prow  
Those dark red shadows were ;  
But soon I saw that my own flesh  
Was red as in a glare.

I turn'd my head in fear and dread,  
And by the holy rood,  
The bodies had advanced, and now  
Before the mast they stood.

They lifted up their stiff right arms  
They held them strait and tight ;  
And each right arm burnt like a torch,  
A torch that's borne upright.  
Their stony eye-balls glitter'd on  
In the red and smoky light.

I pray'd and turn'd my head away  
Forth looking as before.  
There was no breeze upon the bay,  
No wave against the shore.

480 fol. The mariner is looking out on the water, and sees the reflections first ; then he turns and sees the spirits themselves on the deck.

489. **rood.** 'Cross' ; common in earlier English ; cf. Percy's *Reliques*, *Sir Cauline*, l. 115 : "And here I swear by the holy roode ;" Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III, iv, 14 : "No, by the rood, not so."

490. **a seraph-man.** Seraphim are represented in *Isaiah*, vi, as standing beside the throne of God. Later writers, and Milton following them, apply the name to the highest order of angels ; etymologically the word was thought to be connected with the idea of fire, hence "The flaming seraph, fearless though alone" (*Paradise Lost*, V, 875) ; and "As the rapt seraph that adores and burns" (Pope's *Essay on Man*, I, 277) ; this connection also suits the present passage.

497. **impart.** Quaint use of the word, which the present editor is unable to parallel.

500. **But soon.** In the earlier editions "eftsoons."

503. Here follows in the edition of 1798 :

Then vanish'd all the lovely lights ;  
The bodies rose anew ;  
With silent pace, each to his place,  
Came back the ghastly crew.  
The wind that shade nor motion made  
On me alone it blew.

In a copy of this edition, this stanza is struck out, and the following substituted in Coleridge's handwriting :

Then vanished all the lovely lights,  
The spirits of the air,  
No souls of mortal men were they,  
But spirits bright and fair.

512. **shrieve.** An old form of 'shrive,' to confess, absolve, and impose penance; cf. *The Boy and the Mantle* (Percy's *Reliques*), ll. 123-4 :

When she had her shreeven  
And her sines she had tolde.

Dr. Sykes quotes from Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar, August*:

It fell upon a holly eve  
Hey, ho, hollidays  
When holly fathers wont to shrieve.

### PART VII.

517. **marineres.** In the edition of 1798 the word was spelt thus throughout; abandoned as other needless archaisms in the later editions, it is here retained on account of the rhyme.

521-2. "Image taken from the Nether Stowey vicinage. Old stumps of oak, macerated through damp and carpeted with moss, abound in the wooded courts of Quantock." (*Hutchinson.*)

524. **I trow.** I think; a very common phrase in earlier English; cf. Percy's *Reliques*, *The Not-browne Mayd*, ll. 51-52 :

My destiny is for to dy  
A shameful death, I trowe.

533. **Brown skeletons.** In the earlier editions "The skeletons."

535. **ivy-tod.** "Tod" is a bush usually of ivy. So Drayton:

And like an owl, by night to go abroad,  
Roosted all day within an ivy-tod.

and Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar, March*, ll. 67-70 :

At length within any Yvie todde,  
(There shrouded was the little God)  
I heard a busie bustling,  
I bent my bowe against the bush.

540. **a-feared.** Now a colloquialism and vulgarism, but good archaic English. Very common in Shakespeare, e.g., *Macbeth*, V, i, 41 : "A soldier and afeared!"

552-553. Owing to the formation of gases through decomposition, the body of one drowned is likely after some lapse of time to rise to the surface.

558-559. The reference is to the echoes.

570. **all.** See note on l. 111.

577. Biblical phraseology ; cf. *Matthew*, viii, 27 : "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him."

582. In 1798 this stanza read

Since then at an uncertain hour  
Now ofttimes and now fewer,  
That anguish comes and makes me tell  
My ghastly aventure.

585. Cf. *Luke*, xxiv, 32 : "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way."

590. **I teach.** Simply 'I tell' ; cf. Chaucer, *Wif of Bath's Tale*, l. 163 : "Of that I shall thee teche," and 194, "I taughte this answer un-to the knight."

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## WORDSWORTH.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was of Yorkshire lineage ; he himself tells us that the Wordsworths "had been settled at Peniston in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest." For many generations at least his paternal ancestors had dwelt there as yeomen, or small landed proprietors. On his mother's side he was descended from an old Westmoreland family. His northern origin showed itself very clearly both in his physical and mental frame. On these were strongly stamped many of the well-defined peculiarities associated with that sturdy and sterling race, doubtless largely Norse in origin, which inhabits the northern counties of England and the Lowlands of Scotland. As the life of his ancestors, so was his own individual life closely bound up with the northern shires to which he belonged, and more especially with that part of them known as the Lake District. This covers an area of some 30 by 25 miles, and includes within its limits sixteen lakes, tarns and streams innumerable, sea coast, river estuaries, and mountains rising to the height of 3000 feet. Here graceful beauty and wild, rugged grandeur are closely intermingled. "Indeed, nowhere else in the world, perhaps, is so much varied beauty to be found in so narrow a space." In Wordsworth's time it was scarcely less exceptional in the character of its inhabitants. "Drawn in great part from the strong Scandinavian stock, they dwell in a land solemn and beautiful as Norway itself, but without Norway's rigour and penury, and with lakes and happy rivers instead of Norway's inarming melancholy sea. They are a mountain folk ; but their mountains are no precipices of insuperable snow, such as keep the dwellers of some Swiss hamlet shut in ignorance and stagnating into idioey. These barriers divide only to concentrate, and environ only to endear ; their guardianship is but enough to give an added unity to each group of kindred homes. . And thus it is that the Cumbrian dalesmen have afforded perhaps as near a realization as human fates have yet allowed of the rural society which statesmen desire for their country's greatness. They have given an example of substantial comfort strenuously won ; of home affections intensified by independent strength ; of isolation without ignorance, and of a shrewd simplicity ; of an hereditary virtue which needs no support from fanaticism, and to which honour is more than law." (Myers' *Wordsworth*.)

On the northern borders of this district, at Cockermouth, Cumberland, William Wordsworth was born April 7th, 1770. His grandfather had been the first of the race to leave Yorkshire and buy for himself a

small estate in Westmoreland. The poet's father was an attorney and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. In 1778 the poet's mother died, and William, along with an elder brother, was sent to the ancient Grammar School of Hawkeshead, a secluded and primitive village in the midst of the Lake District. The conditions at this simple and old-fashioned school were very different from those surrounding boys either at any of the great public schools or at private boarding-schools. Freedom and simplicity particularly characterized Wordsworth's school days. There was neither pressure of work within the class-room nor that of tradition and public opinion outside of it, such as belong to the English public schools ; on the other hand, the close supervision and confinement which usually belong to a private school, were absent. The boys lodged with the cottagers of the village, and grew inured to the simplicity of their lives. After school hours each boy must have been, in the main, free to follow his own devices. No conditions could have been more suitable to Wordsworth's temperament, or more favourable to the development of his strong individuality. Finally, and most important of all, Hawkeshead lay in the midst of a beautiful and varied country, with whose different aspects their favourite amusements must have made the boys very familiar. Their sports were not of the elaborate, competitive character of later times, but took the form of rambles on the mountains, boating and skating on the lakes, nutting and fishing. In these Wordsworth, a vigorous and healthy boy, greatly delighted. There was probably nothing about him, at this period, which would mark him out, either to himself or to others, as different from, or superior to, his school-fellows. One peculiarity he did, however, possess to a very extraordinary degree —sensitiveness to the aspects of nature. Not that he went mooning about, after a precocious fashion, in search of the picturesque. The ordinary round of daily life kept him in contact with nature in some of her most beautiful and impressive forms, and produced upon his, in this regard, receptive mind effects of a most potent and permanent kind. It kept him in close contact, too, with the common people, with the "statesmen," the shepherds, and peasants of the district ; and from these two sources, nature and the life of the people, he drew the material of his later works.

In October, 1787, Wordsworth entered the University of Cambridge through the kindness of his uncles, for his father had been dead some years. His collegiate life contributed but little to his development. His character was at once strong and narrow, only pliant to congenial

influences. He himself said that his peculiar faculty was *genius*--by which he meant creation and production from within—not *talent*, the capacity of assimilation and appropriation from without. Wordsworth's fruitful knowledge came to him direct from observation and meditation. He seems, accordingly, to have gained little from the regular studies and teaching of Cambridge; nor did he find any special stimulus, as many have done, in the social opportunities which it affords. In college society his powers had no opportunity to show themselves; nor did he form any very intimate or influential friendships. Not that he was, during this period, a recluse; he took his share in ordinary college life; but at college, as at school, he would probably not have impressed an onlooker as being in any respect superior to the average student. By degrees, however, he himself became aware of his special powers, and felt the call to the poetic vocation. In 1784 he wrote his first poem, *An Evening Walk*, which was not published until 1793. Among the most important events of his external life may be numbered his pedestrian tours. Wandering, he tells us, was with him an inborn passion; and it was one in which he indulged throughout his life. In 1790, he with a fellow collegian made a three months' tour of France, Switzerland, Northern Italy and the Rhine. These were stirring days on the Continent; the year before, the Bastille had fallen, and Wordsworth shared, as did most intelligent young Englishmen of his time, in the joy which welcomed the new birth of liberty. As yet, however, natural scenery exercised over him a more powerful influence than human affairs. The impressions of this journey are recorded in *Descriptive Sketches*, a poem which was not written, however, until two years later.

In the beginning of 1791, he took the B.A. degree. His friends wished him to enter the church, but he was reluctant, although he had no definite views of his own. He lingered in London for three months, noting men and things in the keen, meditative fashion natural to him; he made a tour in Wales; he thought of writing for the newspapers. At length he determined to spend a year in France, in order to master the language, with the idea that he might turn it to account in the capacity of a travelling tutor. This stay in France had a very important influence on the poet's development. To escape English society, he went to Orleans. His chief companions there were some French officers who were, most of them, partisans with the old regime. One, however, General Beaupuis, was a lofty and enlightened sympathizer with the Revolution; and through him Wordsworth soon came to take a profound interest in the great struggle going on about him. He was in Paris

shortly after the September Massacres, and felt so deeply the importance of the crisis that he was on the point of throwing himself personally into the contest on the side of the moderate republicans ; but he was under the necessity, probably through lack of money, of returning to England. Change of place did not cool his sympathies. The bloodshed and outrage which accompanied the Revolution and which alienated many of its admirers, Wordsworth with clearer insight perceived to be not the outcome of the new spirit of freedom, but of the oppressions of ages. But when, in the spirit of the era which was supposed to be forever past, the new republic proceeded to embark on a career of conquest : abroad crushed the liberty of Switzerland, and at home began to develop into a military despotism, Wordsworth lost his hope of the future and faith in humanity. A period of deep depression followed, from which he at length, though slowly, recovered. In fact, he passed through a crisis such as befalls many thoughtful men, such as is recorded in the biographies of Carlyle, and of John Stuart Mill ; and such as in familiar life often takes the religious form popularly styled "conversion." Faith in one's own future or the future of the world is shattered, and new truths have to be apprehended, or old truths more vitally realized, in order that the man may once again set out on his life's course with some chart and with some aim. The peculiarity of Wordsworth's case is that his crisis took place in connection with the greatest event of modern history, not with a merely individual experience ; and, secondly, in the peculiar source where he found healing—not in books or the teachings of others, not in what would be ordinarily called a religious source, but in a revelation and healing that came to him direct from visible nature, and from contemplating the simple lives of the "statesmen" and shepherds of his native mountains. The poet's hopes ceased to centre around any great movement like the French Revolution, and he perceived that, not in great political movements, but in the domestic life of the simple, unsophisticated man, is the true anchor for our faith in humanity and our confidence in the future of the race.

Meanwhile, his life had been unsettled, and his prospects uncertain. Unexpectedly, early in 1795, a solution of his difficulties as to the choice of a profession came in the shape of a legacy from a young friend, Raisley Calvert, who had insight enough to perceive the genius of Wordsworth, and left him £900 to enable him to follow out the promptings of this genius. With the strictest economy and utmost plainness of living, Wordsworth judged that this would suffice to maintain him ; and he determined to devote himself unreservedly to what he felt was his

true vocation—poetry. He combined his scanty means with those of his sister Dorothy ; they reckoned from all sources upon a joint income of £70 or £80 a year. Dorothy Wordsworth merits, even in the briefest sketch of her brother's life, at least a passing notice. She shared all his tastes and much of his genius. She was one of the “dumb poets.” She had all her brother's insight into nature, all the feelings which belonged to his poetic endowment ; but the instrument of verse she never mastered, or, perhaps, did not seek to master ; for she devoted her whole life unselfishly to him. His sister Dorothy and the poet Coleridge were, he tells us, the only persons who exerted a profound influence on his spiritual and poetical development.

It was in 1796 that Wordsworth became acquainted with Coleridge ; the two men had many interests and opinions in common, and a close friendship sprang up between them. In order to be near Coleridge the Wordsworths rented a house at Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, in July, 1797. The two men exercised an influence upon each other highly favourable to their intellectual and poetic activity. They planned a volume of poems to which each should contribute. The result was the *Lyrical Ballads*, one of the most notable publications in the history of later English poetry. Coleridge furnished four poems,—*The Ancient Mariner*, and three smaller pieces. The bulk of Wordsworth's contributions was much greater ; and this volume was the first of his writings to manifest the peculiarities of his genius and the greatness of his power. It included the *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey*, *The Thorn, Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, *Lines Written in Early Spring*, etc. It was in 1798 that the *Lyrical Ballads* were issued ; in autumn of the same year Wordsworth, his sister, and Coleridge sailed to Germany. The visit had no special influence upon Wordsworth, whose time was mainly employed in writing poems thoroughly English in character. In the following spring they returned home. In December, 1799, the brother and sister settled down in Dove Cottage, Grasmere, and Wordsworth entered upon a course of life which varied but little during the many years that remained to him. Poetic composition and the contemplation of nature formed the staple of his regular occupations. Of the character of his daily life, the best idea is to be obtained from his sister's diaries, from which large excerpts are given in Knight's *Life of the poet*. The following extract may serve as a sample ; it is dated Saturday, May 1st, 1802 :

“A clear sky. . . . I sowed the flowers, William helped me. We went and sate in the orchard. . . . It was very hot. William wrote

*The Celandine.* We planned a shed, for the sun was too much for us. After dinner we went again to our old resting-place in the hollies under the rock. We first lay under the holly, where we saw nothing but the trees, and a budding elm mossed, with the sky above our heads. But that holly-tree had a beauty about it more than its own. . . . When the sun had got low enough we went to the rock shade. Oh, the overwhelming beauty of the vale below, greener than green. Two ravens flew high, high in the sky, and the sun shone upon their bellies and their wings, long after there was none of his light to be seen but a little space on the top of Loughrigg Fell. Heard the cuckoo to-day, this first of May. We went down to tea at eight o'clock . . . and returned after tea. The landscape was fading: sheep and lambs quiet among the rocks. We walked towards King's, and backwards and forwards. The sky was perfectly cloudless. . . . Three solitary stars in the middle of the blue vault, one or two on the points of the high hills."

In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson, whom he had known since childhood; but this event scarcely interrupted the even tenor of his way. He had a few intimate friends, such as Coleridge and Sir George Beaumont, and in time his writings drew younger men to visit him, DeQuincey, Wilson ("Christopher North"), and even to take up their residence in his neighbourhood. But, on the whole, his life during his prime was the life of a recluse. Nor, with his humbler neighbours, though interested in their welfare, was he on terms of genial intercourse such as marked the relations of Scott to those about him. He was, in short, self-centred, wrapped up in his own thoughts—a reserved man, with a cold and absent-minded exterior. "He wasn't a man as said a deal to common folk," said one of these common folk to an enquirer, "but he talked a deal to hissen." "He was not a man that folks could crack wi'," said another, "nor not a man as could crack wi' folks." In old age, when he became famous, he saw something of literary society in London, and the impression which he made on a very keen, but in this case not very favourable, observer, may be quoted:—"During the last seven or ten years of his life, Wordsworth felt himself to be a recognized lion in certain considerable London circles, and was in the habit of coming up to town with his wife for a month or two every season to enjoy his quiet triumph and collect his bits of tribute *tales quales*. . . . Wordsworth took his bit of lionism very quietly, with a smile sardonic rather than triumphant, and certainly got no harm by it, if he got or expected little good. For the rest, he talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity, and force, as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshop, and as no unwise one could. His voice was good, frank and sonorous, though practically clear, distinct, and forcible rather than melodious; the tone of him business-like, sedately con-

fident ; no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous. A fine, wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. You would have said he was usually a taciturn man ; glad to unlock himself to audience sympathetic and intelligent, when such offered itself. His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation ; the look of it not bland or benevolent so much as close, impregnable and hard, a man *multa tacere loquive paratus*, in a world where he had experienced no lack of contradictions as he strode along. The eyes were not very brilliant, but they had a quiet clearness ; there was enough of brow, and well-shaped ; rather too much of cheek ("horse-face," I have heard satirists say) ; face of squarish shape, and decidedly longish, as I think the head itself was (its "length" going horizontal) ; he was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit, tall, and strong-looking when he stood, a right good old steel-grey figure, with rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a vivacious strength looking through him which might have suited one of those old steel-grey markgrafs whom Henry the Fowler set up to ward the 'marches' and do battle with the intrusive heathen in a stalwart and judicious manner." (Carlyle's *Reminiscences*.)

Wordsworth was a philosopher in the antique sense of the word, shaping his life according to his own ideals, and little regarding the fact that these ideals were very different from those of men in general. He found his happiness in easily attainable sources—in nature, in his own work and thoughts, in literature and domestic life. He cared nothing for wealth or the luxuries which it affords. "Plain living and high thinking" characterized his life ; his daily fare and home surroundings were but little superior to those of the peasantry about him. The only luxury in which he indulged was travelling ; he made tours in Scotland, Ireland, and the Continent, of which his works contain memorials, and these, with frequent visits to friends in England, were among the chief events of his quiet life. The simplicity of the tastes of the household and Mrs. Wordsworth's careful management enabled the poet to subsist with comfort upon an income which would have meant harassing poverty to most men of his class. His works brought him no money ; but the payment in 1802 of a debt due his father's estate added something to his resources, and when these proved inadequate through the increasing expenses of his family, he fortunately obtained (1813) through the influence of the Earl of Lonsdale the office of Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland. This afforded him a sufficient income and did not make claims upon time and energy inconsistent with his devotion to poetic

work. In the same year, 1813, he removed from Grasmere, where he had resided for some fourteen years (nine of them in Dove Cottage) to Rydal Mount, at no great distance; this was his home during the remaining thirty-seven years of his life.

We have noted the appearance of the first great product of Wordsworth's poetical genius, the *Lyrical Ballads*, in 1798. This volume fell almost dead from the press. Wordsworth struck out in new poetic fields, and marked originality in poetry, clashing as it does with pre-conceived ideas, is rarely welcomed. In 1800 he published a new and enlarged edition of the *Ballads* and prefixed a prose statement of his own poetic theory so fundamentally different from accepted notions as to excite the intense hostility of all the regular critics. The consequence was that each new work of his was received with a chorus of disapprobation or contempt. The general public were thus prejudiced; and the poems themselves possessed no striking and attractive qualities such as might have counteracted, among ordinary readers, the influence of accepted judges. The neglect of his work was keenly felt by the poet, who, however, continued steadily on in his own fashion, or even exaggerated the peculiarities which were offensive to the prevalent taste. Meanwhile these works were read and greatly admired by a discerning few, and began quietly to gain a hold upon a wider public, until in the poet's old age this unnoted development suddenly manifested itself in a widespread recognition of his genius. "Between the years 1830 and 1840 Wordsworth passed from the apostle of a clique into the most illustrious man of letters in England. The rapidity of this change was not due to any remarkable accident, nor to the appearance of any new work of genius. It was merely an extreme instance of what must always occur when an author, running counter to the fashion of his age, has to create his own public in defiance of the established critical prowess. The disciples whom he draws round him are for the most part young; the established authorities are for the most part old; so that by the time the original poet is about sixty years old most of his admirers will be about forty, and most of his critics will be dead. His admirers now become his accredited critics; his works are widely introduced to the public, and if they are really good his reputation is secure. In Wordsworth's case the detractors had been unusually persistent, and the reaction, when it came, was therefore unusually violent." (Myers' *Wordsworth*.)

The change in feeling was manifested in many ways. In 1839 Wordsworth received the honorary degree of D.C.L. from Oxford, and

on the occasion of its bestowal was welcomed with great enthusiasm. In 1842 a pension was offered to him ; in 1843 he was made Poet Laureate. Thus full of years and honours, and in that same tranquillity which marked his life, Wordsworth passed away April 23rd, 1850.

*not with*  
*early*

"Every great poet," said Wordsworth, "is a teacher; I wish to be considered as a teacher or as nothing." Wordsworth has, therefore, a didactic aim in his poetry. Happily, however, his conception of teaching was no narrow one ; he did not think that poetry in order to be didactic, must directly present some abstract truth, or be capable of furnishing some moral application ; if a poem kindled the imagination, or stirred the nobler feelings, it contributed in his opinion even more to the education of the reader. His sense of the unity and harmony of things was strong. As in *Tintern Abbey*, we find him giving expression to his sense of the unity of all existence—the setting suns, the round ocean, and the mind of man being all manifestations of one and the same divine spirit—so he believed in the unity and close interconnection of all the faculties of man. No one faculty could be stimulated or neglected without a corresponding effect upon the rest. The delight, for example, afforded by the contemplation of scenery quickened, he thought, the moral nature ; while the man whose imagination or sense of beauty had remained undeveloped must suffer also from limitations and weakness in his ethical constitution. Therefore his work is not generally didactic in the ordinary sense, though not infrequently so ; his poetry may merely stimulate imagination and feeling, and thence educative effects will steal unnoted into heart and brain.

He was a teacher, then ; but his teaching did not mainly aim at imparting any particular system of abstract truth, though this also it may sometimes attempt. It rather sought to elevate and ennable the whole character by exhibiting, and making the reader feel, the sources of high and genuine pleasure. It teaches by revealing, by stimulating, by elevating. Wordsworth thought that the fountain of the purest and highest joys lie about us, within the reach of all. The child finds them everywhere :

Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,  
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway.

But as we grow older the world imposes on us with its lower allurements—wealth, luxury, ambition—which dull our perceptions and degrade our will until we become blind and indifferent to the fountains of the highest happiness and the truest culture. To these, it is Wordsworth's aim in his poetry to lead us back.

The sources of this happiness and this higher culture the poet had in his own personal experiences, when his heart was sick and his beliefs shattered, found in nature, in the homely round of ordinary duties, in the domestic affections, in the contemplation of the life of men in its simplest and most natural form among the peasantry of his native mountains. These things, accordingly, are what he depicts to us in his poems ; they afford his poetic material ; and with all these things his life fitted him to deal. They are not, however, presented simply and for their own sakes, as the more purely artistic method of Shakespeare or Scott would present them. Wordsworth was of strongly meditative and reflective bent ; what he saw and felt, he naturally made the basis of thought. He was not carried away by his joys and sorrows, as Burns and Shelley. His temperament was cool and self-contained, not emotional and impetuous. Nor was he markedly sympathetic, forgetting himself in the life of others. So his poetry neither gives expression simply to feeling, nor does it afford purely objective pictures of men and women ; it uses these things as material or stimulus to thought. Wordsworth does not forthwith set down what he has felt or seen ; he broods over it and shapes it to moral rather than artistic ends. He is not passionate or animated ; his poems appeal, not to the active and impetuous man, but to the contemplative and thoughtful—to age rather than to youth. In this respect, as in others, he is unlike Scott. The latter centres our attention upon the pictures of men and things which he unrolls before us, and rarely intrudes himself or his reflections. But Wordsworth is always in his own poems ; sometimes illegitimately speaking through the mouths of his characters, more often turning aside to reflect or comment.

With the earnestness of Wordsworth's temperament and the seriousness of his aim, playfulness of fancy and delight in mere ornament were scarcely compatible. Unlike Keats, he had not the purely artistic and sensuous nature which could solace itself with such things. Substance with him was all-important, and this substance must be truth. His poetry was based on the facts of life, and showed

How verse may build a throne  
On humble truth.

One merit he especially claimed for himself, that he kept "his eye on the subject." Nothing in the poets who preceded him irritated him more than their inaccuracies—for example, in the delineation of natural scenes, their conscious sacrifice of truth for the sake of what they considered

poetic effect, as exemplified, for instance, in their pastoral poetry. The same spirit which demanded truth in matter called for simplicity and directness in style. He aimed at keeping the reader's eye also on the subject, and did not blur the clearness of the outline of his theme for the sake of the charm of ornament and of technical display. Hence, his style, at its best, is marvellously direct, chaste, and effective ; and, at its worst, tends to prosaic baldness and triviality. So simple, so free from every needless excrescence, so perfectly adapted to the thought, is Wordsworth's expression in his happier moments, that Matthew Arnold has affirmed that he has no style, *i.e.*, the words are so perfectly appropriate that they seem to come from the object, not from the writer. "Nature herself seems," says Matthew Arnold, "to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes : from the profound sincereness with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of the subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere naturalness."

The greatness of Wordsworth and the significance of his poetry can only be adequately conceived when his position in the development of English literature has been examined. The typical and accredited poetical style of the preceding age is represented by Pope. That poetry sought to instruct, or to please the intellect, rather than to stimulate the imagination or to touch the emotions. It put greater stress upon style and form than upon matter ; and, in style, it aimed at elegance, polish, and epigrammatic force. It took much thought for dignity and propriety ; and its ideas of dignity and propriety were narrow. Thus it limited the range of its themes, and feared especially the "low" and commonplace. This tendency affected not only its matter but its language. It avoided, as far as possible, the language of real life, and to escape ordinary words had recourse to vapid periphrases. One result of the narrowness of the range of vocabulary and imagery was that both became utterly hackneyed.

Against all these peculiarities the genius of Wordsworth naturally revolted. He found his model, in as far as he had one, in Burns, a poet outside recognized literary circles—a man of the people. But the fact that existing taste was formed upon such poetry as has just been characterized, and that standards based upon it were being constantly applied to his own poetry, intensified his dislike of the elder fashion, and led him to intensify the novel peculiarities of his own poems.

He was a conscious rebel against authority, and naturally gave the less weight to considerations which might be urged in favour of the old and against the new. Hence, in his theory, and not seldom also in practice he carried these peculiarities to extremes.

In conclusion, two or three great services of Wordsworth as a poet may be enumerated. He opened the eyes of his own generation and still continues, in a lesser degree, to open the eyes of readers of the present day to the beauties of nature, and to the fund of consolation and joy that may there be found. He showed that we do not need to go to distant lands and remote ages for poetic material, that poetry lies about us, in our own age, in ordinary life, in commonplace men and women. And he overthrew the stilted conventional style of the poetry which was in the ascendant, and showed that the highest poetry might be simple, direct, and plain.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.**—Life by Christopher Wordsworth; a fuller one by Prof. Knight; excellent shorter sketch with criticisms by Myers (*Eng. Men of Letters*); Wordsworth's autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, is of the highest value for biographical purposes; much use is made of it by Légouis in his excellent *Early Life of Wordsworth*. Works—full critical ed. by Knight, 8 vols.; ed. by Dowden, 7 vols.; in one vol., with introd. by Morley (Macmillan's *Globe Library*). Critical essays are very numerous; Wordsworth's prose preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* should be read in connection with Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, chaps. v., xiv., xvii.-xxii.; among best essays by other writers are those by M. Arnold (Introd. to *Select. from Wordsworth*), Lowell (*Among My Books*), R. H. Hutton (*Essays on Literary Criticism*), Leslie Stephen (*Hours in a Library*, iii), Caird (*Essays on Literature and Philosophy*), Principal Shairp, Masson, etc.; *Wordsworthiana* is a vol. containing papers by members of the *Wordsworth Soc.*; the one vol. ed. of works mentioned above has a bibliography. The best volume of *Selections* is that by Dowden, with introduction and notes (Ginn & Co.).

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## THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

Written in 1797 ; first published in the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). “This arose out of my observations of the affecting music of these birds hanging in this way in the London streets during the freshness and stillness of the spring morning.” (*Wordsworth*.)

The poem is an illustration of a remark of Myers that Wordsworth is “the poet not of London considered as London, but of London considered as a part of the country.”

*The Title* was until 1815 “Poor Susan.”

1. **Wood Street** runs off Cheapside in London.
2. **Hangs** was until 1820 “There’s.”
7. **Lothbury** is another street in the same neighbourhood, the *city* proper.
8. **Cheapside** is the main thoroughfare in the city.
16. In the original edition, the poem closed with the following stanza :

Poor Outcast ! return—to receive thee once more  
The house of thy Father will open its door,  
And thou once again in thy plain russet gown,  
May’st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.

In the next edition, 1802, this stanza was dropped. In reference to this, Lamb says in a letter of 1815, addressed to Wordsworth : “The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan’s moral conduct. Susan is a serving maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics : but to term her ‘a poor outcast’ seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express.”

## TO MY SISTER.

This poem was composed in the spring of 1798, in front of Alfoxden House (see p. 80 above), near Nether Stowey ; it was included in the *Lyrical Ballads* published during the same year. The poet notes : “My little-boy-messenger on this occasion [the Edward of l. 13] was the son of Basil Montague. The larch mentioned in the first stanza was standing when I revisited the place in May, 1841, more than forty years after.” The sister addressed is, of course, Dorothy Wordsworth (see p. 122 above).

The poem exemplifies Wordsworth's sense of the community between man and nature ; the air, the trees, the fields seem to feel as man feels. It also exhibits his sense of the power of nature in moulding and elevating character, and proclaims the value of a passive enjoyment of her spirit and beauty. Such enjoyment may seem idleness, but it is idleness more productive than is the restless analysis of mere intellect (which the world at large calls *useful* employment) inasmuch as it induces a proper temper and frame of mind,—more needful, in the poet's opinion, for right thinking than are logic and reasoning power.

18. Our calendar shall not be a conventional one, but shall be determined by the actual course of nature ; this is exemplified in the next two lines.

26. Until 1837 this line read

Than fifty years of reason.

33. Cf. the passage in *Tintern Abbey* quoted in the note on *Nutting*, below.

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#### EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

The dates of composition and publication are the same as in the preceding poem. "The lines entitled *Expostulation and Reply*, and those which follow, arose out of a conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy." (Wordsworth.) Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, in his edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, argues that the friend is William Hazlitt, who visited Coleridge at Stowey in the summer of 1798 (see pp. 81-2 above), was at that date a great student of the modern moral philosophers, and was engaged in writing a philosophical work on *The Principles of Human Action*. Mr. Hutchinson thinks the very occasion of the poem is referred to in the following extract from Hazlitt's *My First Acquaintance with Poets* ; during a walk from Alfoxden to Stowey "I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible."

The 'expostulation' is put in the mouth of "Matthew," a personage who appears in other poems also, and seems to be modelled upon the poet's old schoolmaster at Hawkshead, William Taylor ; it is addressed to "William," who is the poet himself,—at least the 'reply' embodies his peculiar ideas.

This poem is a sort of defence of the “idleness” which is recommended in the previous piece.

13. **Esthwaite lake.** A lakelet, about two miles long, west of Windermere, and in the immediate neighbourhood is Hawkshead, where Wordsworth went to school ; see map.

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### THE TABLES TURNED.

Composed and published in 1798.

These lines are addressed by ‘William’ of the preceding poem, to ‘Matthew,’ and continue the same argument. The point emphasized here is the superiority of the temper and general character begotten by intercourse with nature, to that produced by a purely intellectual attitude of mind which is always busied with pulling things to pieces in order to find the way they are put together, or with seeking reasons for their existence ; but which does not look at things as they are, or have any time for *feeling* about things. The thought which Wordsworth here and elsewhere utters, is partly the outcome of a widespread reaction against the hard, dry intellectualism of the 18th century ; an example of a parallel movement in another sphere is the uprisal of Methodism against the purely ethical and logical trend of theology in the earlier part of the century

1-4. Before 1820 :

Up ! up ! my friend, and clear your looks,  
Why all this toil and trouble ?  
Up ! up ! my friend, and quit your books  
Or surely you'll grow double.

9. “Of making many books there is no end ; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” (*Ecclesiastes*, xii. 12.)

14. Before 1815 : “And he is no mean preacher.”

19-20. Truth, the poet believes, is not to be attained by mere logic ; it is the result not of merely mental processes, but of the whole nature of man ; so Tennyson, in *In Memoriam*, cxiii, puts knowledge, which is the product of the *mind*, below wisdom, the outcome of the *soul* ; cf. *John*, vii, 17 : “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”

## "THREE YEARS SHE GREW."

This poem was written in 1799 whilst Wordsworth was living in Germany, at Goslar, on the borders of the Hartz Forest, and was first published in the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). It belongs to a group of very beautiful lyrics, all written about the same time, and all referring, seemingly, to one heroine called, in the poems, Lucy. There is no evidence to show that there was any actual personage corresponding to 'Lucy'; hence it is an open question whether or not the experiences recorded are wholly imaginary. The other 'Lucy' poems are "Strange fits of passion have I known," "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," "I travell'd among unknown men," and "A slumber did my spirit seal."

This poem is as eminently beautiful as it is characteristic of the style, thought and feeling of Wordsworth: in the simplicity yet charm of its metrical music; in the directness and naturalness yet effectiveness and beauty of its language; in the faith which it expresses in the educating influences of nature; in its subtle communication to the reader of the sense of those influences and of the charm of unsullied maidenhood; and, perhaps most striking of all, in the intensity yet calm and resignation of feeling which permeate the closing lines. (Cf. the way in which the tragedy of *Michael* is narrated.) "In the greater of the earlier pieces, emotion is uniformly suggested rather than expressed, or, if I may be allowed the paradox, expressed by reticence, by the jealous parsimony of a half-voluntary, half-involuntary reserve." (*Hutton, Wordsworth's Two Styles.*)

7-8. This is the reading of the original edition. In 1802, the lines read

Her Teacher I myself will be,  
She is my darling; and with me

but in 1805 the poet restored the original text and retained it in subsequent editions.

14. **lawn.** An open, grassy expanse; the word originally meant an open glade in the woods, and the associations with houses and the gardener's care are modern; there is nothing of the latter kind intended here; cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV, 252:

Betwixt them lawns or level downs and flocks  
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed.

So in the *Nativity Hymn*, l. 85: "The shepherds on the lawn," and Goldsmith, *Deserted Village*, l. 35: "Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn."

16-18. Cf. *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, ll. 161-164 :

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie ;  
 His daily teachers had been woods and rills,  
 The silence that is in the starry sky,  
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

18. **insensate.** In its original etymological meaning : *insensatus*, not endowed with senses.

23. In 1800 this line read

A beauty that shall mould her form.

But in 1802 and subsequent editions the line stands as in the text.

28. **round.** A dance : cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queen* :

A troop of Faunes and Satyres far away  
 Within the wood were dancing in a round.

40. Dr. Sykes reads : "This calm, and quiet scene" and annotates "Calm," is the authoritative reading (1805, '43, '46, etc.) ; yet 1802, Morley and other recent editions read "calm and quiet scene." The punctuation is a matter of importance provided only that the comma indicates 'calm' to be a noun, but in that case the omission of the 'this' with 'quiet scene' would be awkward.

#### INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS.

Written in 1799; first published in Coleridge's periodical, *The Friend*, for December 28th, 1809, where it follows Coleridge's prose description of skating on the lake at Ratzeburg. The title in *The Friend* was *Growth of Genius from the influence of Natural Objects on the Imagination, in Boyhood and Early Youth*. This poem forms a part of Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem, *The Prelude* (Bk. I, ll. 401, ff.). It is a reminiscence of the poet's school-days ; the lake is Esthwaite, the village, Hawkshead.

**Wordsworth and Nature.** Nature, *i.e.*, man's dwelling-place—the world of mountains, fields, lakes, sky, trees, etc.—was a more important factor in Wordsworth's life than in that, perhaps, of any other poet. He spent a great part of his time in the contemplation of it, and it shaped his philosophy in a quite peculiar way.\* In his own experience, this communing with nature had comforted and soothed him even in his time of greatest need, and seemed to stimulate and instruct the higher

\* See the extract from Dorothy Wordsworth's Diary, pp. 122-3 above.

man within him. Such experience is not, in every respect, unique. Many persons in that day, and still more in ours, have found intense and elevating pleasure in beautiful scenery. But Wordsworth had these feelings to an extraordinary degree, and the circumstances both of his boyhood and of his later life were such as to develop them to the utmost. He possessed, therefore, very unusual qualifications for speaking upon such matters; and, being master also of the gift of poetic expression, became one of the greatest of nature-poets. He utters for others, with marvellous truth and felicity, what they themselves have vaguely noted or felt in regard to nature; his keener observation and appreciation enable him to open the eyes of his readers to much of beauty that would have escaped their attention. But, further, Wordsworth's enjoyment of the world about him was not confined merely to pleasure in variety and beauty of form and colour. These things which address themselves to the bodily eye seemed to him the outward manifestations of an indwelling spirit,—a spirit akin to his own, and in harmony with it. The *divine*, in short, lay behind these outward shows; in them God was manifesting himself, and through them man might come into closest relations with God. Hence, for Wordsworth, there gathered about nature a deep sense of mystery and of reverence; in his breast it excited feelings of a profound and religious character—far beyond mere delight in sensuous beauty. It is the emphasis that he lays upon this aspect of nature, and upon the feelings derived from it, that gives the most distinctive quality to his nature poetry.\*

The poem in which we find the most adequate account of Wordsworth's characteristic view of nature, is the *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*, where he also explains that this full appreciation of her significance was a gradual growth. In the poem before us, and in the poem on *Nutting*, which follows, we have an exemplification of one of the earlier stages, when Nature takes him in hand,† as it were, and begins her course of instruction. Through no lofty motive but in the pursuit of boyish pleasures, he is brought into close contact with some of the most beautiful aspects of the material world; these are the background of his daily life and are intertwined with his keenest enjoyments and most vivid experiences; and at favourable moments, as in those recorded in these two poems, there steals upon his boyish heart some vague consciousness of her beauty, and of her power.

\* We may contrast him with Scott and Tennyson, who delight in natural scenery and phenomena, but only for their beauty and charm, without the sense of mysterious sympathy, of the deep import which lies beneath what presents itself to the bodily eye.

† Cf. the poem "Three years she grew."

1-4. The poet addresses the Spirit of which we have spoken above. This Spirit or Mind gives form and energy to mere material things ; cf. the passage from *Tintern Abbey* cited in the note on *Nutting*.

6-10. So in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which he explains his theory of poetry, one of the reasons that he gives for preferring "humble and rustic life" as a subject for poetry is, "in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."

9. Not, for example, with the mean and perishable surroundings of the poorer classes in an ugly, manufacturing town, but with magnificent mountains and valleys of the Lake country.

10-11. Association with these nobler things elevates the beginnings and sources of our feeling and thought ; cf. *Personal Talk, continued*, ll. 2-4.

12-14. Through the elevation and insight thus attained (viz., by association with what is noble in life and nature) we learn to find, even in pain and fear, sources of consolation and strength, and a proof of the greatness of human nature even in the intensity of our emotions. This is a characteristic thought with Wordsworth ; it lies at the basis of the *Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle* ; cf. also the close of the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* :

We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind :  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be ;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live ;  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears.

20. **trembling lake** refers to the quivering of the water, noticeable through the motion of the reflections, even in very calm weather.

23. Before 1845, "'Twas mine among the fields."

27. In *The Prelude* (1850) this line reads : "The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom."

37. **loud-chiming.** Until 1840 the reading was "loud bellowing."

Cf. the whole of Theseus' description of the hounds in *Mids. Night's Dream*, IV, i, and especially "match'd in mouth like bells."

40. **Smitten.** Until 1836 "Meanwhile."

41-2. Coleridge, in *The Friend*, says: "When very many are skating together the sounds and the noises give an impulse to the icy trees, and the woods all round the lake *tinkle*."

Cf. also Tennyson's description of a wintry night in *Morte d' Arthur*:

The bare, black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of iron heels.

50-2. The reading in the text dates from 1827. At first the lines stood :

To cut across the image of a Star  
 That gleam'd upon the ice; and oftentimes

in 1820 :

To cross the bright reflection of a Star  
 Image, that, flying still before me—gleamed  
 Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes

in *The Prelude*:

To cut across the reflex of a star,  
 That fled, and flying still, etc.

58-60. When continued and swift motion is stopped, we feel for a time as if the motion were continued in things about us; cf. the sensation of dizziness. In l. 60 the emphasis is on "visible."

63. In *The Prelude*: "Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep."

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### NUTTING.

Written in Germany in 1799, published in 1800; intended to form part of *The Prelude*, "but struck out," says Wordsworth, "as not being wanted there. Like most of my schoolfellows, I was an impassioned Nutter. For this pleasure, the Vale of Esthwaite, abounding in coppice wood, furnished a very wide range. These verses arose out of the remembrance of feelings I had often had when a boy, and particularly in the extensive woods that still [1843] stretch from the side of Esthwaite Lake toward Graythwaite, the seat of the ancient family of Sandys."

"The poem—a fragment of autobiography—illustrates the processes and incidents by which Wordsworth's animal joy in nature in boyhood was gradually purified and spiritualized." (Dowden.)

The five selections preceding have all to do with the one theme—the influence of nature as an educator of man. In *Nutting* the poet dwells with fond delight upon a remembrance of boyish years, when, by mere

animal activity and childish pleasures, he was drawn into contact with nature in her beauty and repose; yet, even then, he was half-conscious of her charm, and already vaguely felt a *spirit* in nature, and a sympathy with that spirit—things of which he made so much in his later philosophy, life, and poetry.

The poem is in the main descriptive, and we feel that, to some extent, the poet elaborates and lingers upon the details for their own sake, and because they are associated with a glow of youthful life and the faery charm that haunts the fresh experiences of children. (Cf. *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* and *To the Cuckoo*.) But it is characteristic of Wordsworth that the poem is (1) not a mere description of nature as it presents itself to the bodily eye, but of nature as influencing man; and (2) that the picture serves to lead up to an interpretation of nature—to the statement of something which is the outcome, not of mere observation by the bodily organs, but of the imaginative and philosophic faculty:—

A sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

—(*Lyrical Composed above Tintern Abbey*.)

4. This line was added in 1827.

5. Up to 1827, the line read: “When forth I sallied from our cottage door.” The *cottage* was that of Anne Tyson (“the frugal dame” of l. 11), where Wordsworth lodged (see p. 119, above).

6. “And with a wallet” was the reading before 1815.

9-12. Before 1815

of Beggar's weeds  
Put on for the occasion, by advice  
And exhortation of my frugal Dame.

14-16. Before 1836 these lines read:

Among the woods  
And o'er the pathless rocks, I forc'd my way  
Until at length I came.

20. **tempting clusters.** Before 1845 “milk-white clusters.”

33. **water-breaks.** Ripples or wavelets; cf. Tennyson's *Brook*:

With many a silvery water-break  
Above the golden gravel.

36. **under.** Before 1845 "beneath."

50. Before 1836 this line read "Even then, when from the bower I turned away." Dowden suggests that the alteration was made "to avoid the thrice-repeated 'en' sound in the opening words."

53. **saw** inserted for the first time in 1836.

**intruding sky.** The epithet is applied because the sky was only made visible through the breaking of the branches, and its light seemed at variance with the previous seclusion of the spot.

54. **dearest Maiden.** The poet is no doubt addressing his sister Dorothy.

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### MICHAEL.

Written at Town-end, Grasmere, 1800. In Dorothy Wordsworth's journal, under date Oct. 11 of that year, occurs the entry: "We walked up Green-head Ghyll in search of a sheepfold. . . . The sheepfold is falling away. It is built nearly in the form of a heart unequally divided." In the diary there follow numerous references to Wordsworth's working upon the poem, usually at the sheepfold. On Dec. 9, there is the entry: "W. finished his poem to-day," the reference being probably to *Michael*. *Michael* was included in the edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* dated 1800, but actually published in Jan. 1801.

In Professor Knight's edition, and in Dowden's *Aldine* edition, will be found a number of fragments, intended for *Michael*, recovered from a MS. book of Dorothy Wordsworth's. "The greater portion of these fragments are occupied with an episode judiciously omitted, which tells of the search made in late autumn by Michael and his son for a stray sheep." (Dowden.)

"The character and circumstances of Luke," said Wordsworth, "were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-end, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere." On another occasion he said: "Michael was founded on the son of an old couple having become dissolute, and run away from his parents; and on an old shepherd having been seven years in building up a sheepfold in a solitary valley." On April 9, 1801, Wordsworth wrote to his friend Thomas Poole: "In writing [*Michael*], I had your character often before my eyes, and sometimes thought that I was delineating such a man as you yourself would have been, under the same circumstances;" again, "I have attempted

to give a picture of a man of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart,—parental affection and the love of property, *landed* property, including the feelings of inheritance, home, and personal and family independence.” To Charles James Fox he wrote: “In the two poems, *The Brothers* and *Michael*, I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections, as I know they exist among a class of men who are now almost confined to the north of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land, here called ‘statesmen,’ men of respectable education, who daily labour on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population; if these men are placed above poverty. But, if they are proprietors of small estates which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire amongst such men, is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet on which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances, when they would otherwise be forgotten. . . . The two poems that I have mentioned were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply. . . . The poems are faithful copies from nature; and I hope whatever effect they may have upon you, you will at least be able to perceive that they may excite profitable sympathies in many kind and good hearts; and may in some small degree enlarge our feelings of reverence for our species, and our knowledge of human nature, by showing that our best qualities are possessed by men whom we are too apt to consider, not with reference to the points in which they resemble us, but to those in which they manifestly differ from us.” Of this class of landed-proprietors, the last survivors of the *yeomanry* of England, Mr. Myers says “they have afforded as near a realization as human fates would allow of the rural society which statesmen desire for their country’s welfare.” It was the contemplation of their virtues which was one of the chief sources of healing for Wordsworth’s dejection and loss of faith in human nature (see p. 121 above).

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**Wordsworth and Man.**—We have had several examples of Wordsworth’s attitude towards nature, and of the poetic use that he makes of the material derived thence. But Wordsworth’s poetry also treats of man and human life, and in this sphere, as in the other, his work pre-

sents marked peculiarities. In contrast with the majority of poets, and especially in contrast with the school of poets who had been dominant in England during the greater part of the century, Wordsworth takes his themes from humble, rustic, commonplace life. He thus, at once, abandons the advantages which a dignified or romantic theme, or one which treats of remote times and places, yields. Those very sources of charm which lie upon the surface in the case of *The Ancient Mariner* or of *The Lady of the Lake*—varied and romantic incidents, picturesque manners and costume, plot interest, the stimulus of mystery and curiosity—are usually, as in *Michael*, excluded by the poet's very selection of subject. Nor does he attempt to introduce these attractions in any adventitious way, to invest his poems by his style and treatment with some of these qualities which do not naturally accompany his theme.\* What then are the sources of his poetic power? What is it that makes such a poem as *Michael* a work of extraordinary beauty and charm?

There are two main points which should be noted in the poem before us as particularly distinctive of Wordsworth's genius and art. (1) He chooses his theme for the nobility, intensity, and beauty of the emotion involved, not because of the strikingness of the external facts that form the environment of this emotion. In this respect he is unlike Scott; he cares nothing for picturesque personages and events, provided he finds a subject which presents some noble, affecting, important truth of human nature.† So in *Michael* the fatherly love which is the centre of the whole is a beautiful and noble trait of human nature in whatever surroundings exhibited; and its tragic disappointment is naturally fitted to awaken intense sympathy in the reader. Evidently these are two great merits—even perhaps the greatest—that a poetic theme could have; so great, at least, that the poet is able to dispense with many of the more superficial attractions which a romantic poem such as *The Lady of the Lake* affords. Wordsworth, accordingly, neglecting all adventitious and external ornaments, gives his whole energy to bringing this fatherly love home to our own hearts and sympathies. If the student will examine the poem from this point of view, he will see that it has a unity which *The Lady of the Lake* cannot boast; every portion contributes something to make us feel and understand how tender and

\* As Tennyson occasionally does, e.g., in *Enoch Arden*, which affords a very interesting parallel and contrast to *Michael*.

† "Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling." (Wordsworth, *Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads*.)

deep was Michael's love, or else to comprehend that other feeling—Michael's profound attachment to his home and property—which is also essential as leading to the boy's departure from home, and to the tragic conclusion of the story.

(2) The second point to be specially noted is that the poet does not present the series of events simply for their own sake, as Scott and as Shakespeare do; but that, further, although in a very unobtrusive fashion, he teaches a lesson. (See p. 126 above.) He himself, in his meditative fashion, has found illumination and solace in this simple tale; he weaves his feeling and his thought through the whole texture of the work, and brings it home, if unobtrusively, yet none the less effectively, to the reader. The truth that Wordsworth drew from this picture of humble life, the feeling which it aroused in him, was that of the innate dignity and worth of human nature; and through the poem he intensifies our sense of reverence for the race, our hopes for the future of mankind. It is noteworthy that though the story is a sad one, the effect of the poem is not depressing—quite the contrary. We are touched and subdued, not harrowed, as by the wretched sensational realism of so much of our present day literature; we hear

The still, sad music of humanity  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue.

Nor is this a chance peculiarity of *Michael*; it is a pervading note in Wordsworth's philosophy and poetry. The great event of Wordsworth's life was the crisis produced by the French Revolution. (See p. 121 above.) In emerging from this he discovered sources of happiness and consolation open to all, which raised him from the depth of dejection and pessimism to a permanent level of cheerfulness, and sometimes to heights of ecstatic joy. To reveal these sources of happiness to mankind was his chosen task. And so, whether he treats of nature or of man, Wordsworth is eminently the consoler. "Wordsworth's poetry is great," says Matthew Arnold, "because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it. The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us, therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, word

Of joy in widest commonality spread.

Here is an immense advantage for a poet. Wordsworth tells us of what all seek, and tells us of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it."

From this point of view at which we now are, it will be noted that the selection of humble personages and humble life is a positive advantage, because fine feeling and fine character in a situation where the casual advantage of the few—wealth, high culture, etc.—are absent, seem to be inherent in human nature itself, and do not seem to be the outcome of surroundings. Note also that here, in some measure, as in *The Lady of the Lake*, we have a picture of manners, customs, and life as developed by special circumstances in a particular locality. But in the case of Scott, the introduction of this element has its ground in the picturesqueness of the life depicted, in its remoteness and romantic character; in the case of Wordsworth, in the fact that the simple, wholesome manner of life is a pleasing spectacle in itself and begets cheering views as to the actual and possible development of the finer elements of human nature under quite attainable conditions. If the picture is poetical, it is poetical because the homely details are ennobled (as they would equally be in real life) by elevation of character and feeling in the persons concerned. The only accessory in the poem possessing external beauty, is the scenery of mountain, glen, and storm which forms the background of the human interest. But this, too, is of the essence of the story, because, in the first place, it forms the actual surroundings of the North-country shepherd whose life the poet is realistically depicting; and in the second place, because, according to Wordsworth's belief, some of the essential traits of Michael's character are in part due to the influence of this impressive scene. Michael has been educated, as Wordsworth describes himself as being educated, by mountains, and storm, and sky.\* So that the landscape is also an essential of the situation. Again we have a contrast with Scott; he describes the scenery of the Trosachs, merely on account of its beauty, as part of the picture for the sensuous imagination. Such set descriptions as are to be found in Scott's poem, are wholly absent from *Michael*; nature is only introduced as influencing man, and as explaining the action.

Since the main effects, then, of the poem depend upon the intensity of the sympathy aroused in the reader with the central emotion, and upon his belief in the possible existence of such persons, feelings and situations, it is evidently incumbent upon the poet that he should be realistic and should avoid fanciful, idyllic beauties such as are to be found in

\* See opening of *Influence of Natural Objects*.

*The Lady of the Lake.* Accordingly, Wordsworth keeps close to actual facts ; he shuns no bare or homely detail of simple shepherd life ; he adds no borrowed charm from poetic fancy. There is none of the improbable prettiness of Tennyson's *May Queen*.

In unison with the simplicity of the theme and the realistic sincerity of the treatment, the style is simple and direct, sometimes even to the verge of baldness. There is no needless ornament, no seeking for archaic or distinctively poetical language, yet there is no banality or childish simplicity. Wordsworth's expression, here as elsewhere, is marked by directness, sincerity and aptness, accompanied by dignity, beauty and harmony to a degree unsurpassed in the English language. "Nature herself," as Matthew Arnold says, "seems to take the pen out of his hand and write for him, with her bare, sheer penetrating power."

2. **Ghyll.** "In the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, a short and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley with a stream running through it." (*Wordsworth.*)

6. **around.** Before 1827 "beside."

18-20. Before 1836

And to that place a story appertains  
Which, though it be ungarnished with events,  
Is not unft, I deem, etc.

24-33. In *Tintern Abbey* Wordsworth refers to the same fact, that nature interested him before men ; see ll. 72-93.

49-52. Note the fine cadence of this passage.

51. **subterraneous music.** "I am not sure that I understand this aright. Does it mean the sound of the wind under overhanging cliffs and in hollows of the hills ?" (*Dowden.*)

61-77. Here, as in *Nutting*, beautiful nature, accidentally as it were, associated with daily employments, obtains a hold upon the imagination and moulds his character. With this passage may be compared the following lines from the rejected fragments of *Michael* referred to above, p. 139 :—

No doubt if you in terms direct had asked  
Whether he loved the mountains, true it is  
That with blunt repetition of your words  
He might have stared at you, and said that they  
Were frightful to behold, but had you then  
Discoursed with him . . . . .  
Of his own business, and the goings on  
Of earth and sky, then truly had you seen  
That in his thoughts there were obscurities,  
Wonder and admiration, things that wrought  
Not less than a religion in his heart.

66-67. Before 1836

the hills which he so oft  
Had climbed with vigorous steps.

73-74. Before 1832 the passage read :

So grateful in themselves, the certainty  
Of honourable gains; these fields, these hills  
Which were his living Being, even more  
Than his own blood—

As Prof. Dowden points out, "The narration which follows shows that the fields and hills were *not* more a part of Michael's being than was his own son."

78-9. Before 1815 as follows :

He had not passed his days in singleness,  
He had a Wife, a comely Matron, old—

89-90. The poet seems to regard "With one foot in the grave," as a local expression.

99. the. Before 1836 "their."

112. Before 1836 : "Did with a huge projection overbrow."

115. utensil. The stress is on the first syllable—a pronunciation now almost obsolete.

133. with large prospect. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV, 142-4 :

Yet higher than their tops  
The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung,  
Which to our general Sire gave prospect large.

**Dunmail-Raise.** The pass from Grasmere to Keswick.

139. "The name of the Evening Star," the poet told Miss Fenwick, "was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley, more to the north."

144-5. Before 1827 as follows :

Effect which might perhaps have been produced  
By that instinctive tenderness.

145. Before 1836

Blind spirit which is in the blood of all.

147. This line was inserted first in 1836.

152, ff. It will be noted how many circumstances the poet inserts in order to make the fatherly affection especially intense in the case of Michael : he has but one child, the son of his old age, is constantly in his company, etc.

158. Before 1836 :

His cradle, with a woman's gentle hand.

163-6. Before 1836 :

Had work by his own door, or when he sat  
With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool,  
Beneath the large old Oak, which near their door  
Stood, and from its enormous breadth of shade.

169. **Clipping Tree.** “Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.” (*Wordsworth's note.*)

200-4. Admirable expression of a common experience : through sympathy with the feelings of others—the fresher, imaginative feelings of childhood, for example—familiar objects and experiences win a new impressiveness and power.

201-3. Compare the elevation, beauty, and suggestiveness of diction and rhythm here with their simplicity in such lines as 174-6 ; in each case the style is in admirable keeping with thought.

207. This reading was introduced in 1815. In the first issue of 1800 the reading was

While this good household were thus living on

in the second issue

While in this fashion which I have described  
This simple Household thus were living on.

221-3. Before 1836 :

As soon as he had gathered so much strength  
That he could look his trouble in the face,  
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell.

246-7. Even his affection for his son intensifies his attachment to the land.

253. Before 1836 : “May come again to us. If here he stay.”

258. “The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel, and is on the right hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside.” (*Wordsworth's note.*)

283. “There is a slight inconsistency here. The conversation is represented as taking place in the evening (see l. 227).” (*Knight.*)

298. Often distinction is given to a passage by a reminiscence, half unconscious it may be, of Scriptural language ; here, for example, is a suggestion of the touching speech of Judah to Joseph (see *Genesis*, xliv, especially vv. 22 and 31).

304. "With daylight" in 1820 replaced "Next morning" of the earlier editions.

324. a Sheepfold. "It may be proper to inform some readers that a sheepfold in these mountains is an unroofed building of stone walls, with different divisions. It is generally placed by the side of a brook, for the convenience of washing the sheep; but it is also useful as a shelter for them, and as a place to drive them into, to enable the shepherds conveniently to single out one or more for any particular purpose." (*Wordsworth's note.*)

327. by the streamlet's edge. Before 1815, "close to the brook side."

338. touch On. Before 1836, "speak Of."

340. oft. Before 1827, "it."

373. threescore. Before 1827, "sixty."

377-8. This also would increase his attachment to the land.

387. A suggestion of action on the boy's part.

406-10. In 1800 these lines read :

let this Sheepfold be  
Thy anchor and thy shield; amid all fear  
And all temptation, let it be to thee  
An emblem of the life thy Fathers lived.

414-15. After the fashion recorded in Scripture, the covenant is ratified by an external sign; cf. *Genesis*, ix, 13: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth;" *Exodus*, xxxi, 16: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant;" and *I Samuel*, xviii, 3-4: "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David," etc.

423. This line was added in 1815; previously the following line had read :

Next morning, as had been resolv'd, the Boy.

448. Notice how Wordsworth passes lightly over the crisis of anguish and sorrow (as he does also at l. 425) instead of harrowing the feelings by detailing it; the first word here is of *comfort*, not of sorrow, that springs from strength of love. This is characteristic of Wordsworth's attitude. Cheerfulness is with him a duty, a mark of a wholesome nature, the frame of mind needful for the attainment of truth. (Cf. *The Tables Turned*, l. 20.) Wordsworth would fain believe that in the world

there is nothing in which there is not an over-balance of good ; if there is such an experience, he certainly shuns presenting it in his poetry.

450. Before 1820 :

Would break the heart :—Old Michael found it so.

454-5. There is a certain charm in the repetition of these lines (see ll. 43-4), as in the repetition in ll. 2, 322, and 482.

456. "From 1800 to 1827 the line closed with 'up upon the sun'; in 1832 the fault was amended by the reading 'up towards the sun.' But when making the revision for 1836, Wordsworth decided uniformly to treat 'towards' as a monosyllable and accordingly he substituted the present reading." (*Dowden*.)

### TO THE CUCKOO.

According to Wordsworth himself, this poem was composed in the orchard at Town-end, Grasmere, 1804 ; but entries in his sister Dorothy's journal indicate that it was written in March 23-26, 1802. Knight suggests that "it may have been altered and readjusted in 1804." It was first published in 1807.

Wordsworth is fond of referring to the cuckoo ; see *To Sleep* (p. 69), l. 8 ; the poem beginning "Yes, it was the mountain echo," a sonnet *To the Cuckoo*, *The Cuckoo at Laverna*, etc. ; in his *Guide to the Lakes*, he writes : "There is also an imaginative influence in the voice of the cuckoo, when that voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley" ; and the imaginative suggestiveness of the voice is also referred to in *The Excursion*, II, ll. 346-8 :

... . only from the neighbouring vales  
The cuckoo straggling up to the hill tops,  
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place,

As in the case of the *Green Linnet* (see note p. 151), the bird is not the theme of the poem ; here, however, it is the occasion. Certain peculiarities of the cuckoo, sufficiently indicated by the poet, make it suggestive to the childish mind, of the unknown and vague. Most of us can look back on some place or scene, pregnant for our childish minds with vague possibilities of beauty and adventure. In those days there is an interest and freshness about life which gradually vanishes as we grow older. This sense of poetry and romance was abnormally strong in the child Wordsworth. He refers to it repeatedly in his poetry, especially in the

*Immortality Ode* and in *Tintern Abbey*, and in the former poem has chosen to suggest a mystical explanation of it.

Of this ideal world in which the mind of the imaginative boy Wordsworth dwells much, the cuckoo became the symbol; and now, in mature years, as the poet listens to its familiar cry, a two-fold stimulus is given to his feelings: first, through the associations with boyhood and its happiness; second, through the associations with the ideal and the life of imagination. In the flood of feeling which pours over the poet's heart the "golden time" of youth seems renewed, and the commonplaceness which maturer years has imparted to his surroundings temporarily vanishes; once more the world becomes an "unsubstantial faery place," an ideal realm.

Palgrave says: "This poem has an exultation and glory, joined with an exquisiteness of expression, which places it in the highest rank among the many masterpieces of its illustrious author."

4. **wandering Voice.** Cf. "erratic voice" (*Sonnet to the Cuckoo*), and "vagrant voice" (*The Cuckoo at Laverna*).

5-8. The reading in the text is that of 1845. In 1807:

While I am lying on the grass  
I hear thy restless shout:  
From hill to hill it seems to pass  
About, and all about!

In 1815:

While I am lying on the grass,  
Thy loud note smites my ear!  
From hill to hill it seems to pass  
At once far off and near.

In 1820 he changed the third line into

It seems to fill the whole air's space.

The second line of 1807 is however more vivid than the line which replaced it in 1815. So he amends this and recovers the word "shout" (cf. the lines just quoted from *The Excursion*, and also Bk. VII, l. 408: "not for his delight The vernal cuckoo shouted"), by the following version of 1827:

While I am lying on the grass,  
Thy twofold shout I hear,  
That seems to fill the whole earth's space  
As loud far off as near.

In 1845 he restored the original 3rd line, and the 4th line of 1815.

The poet's solicitude, thus exhibited, in characterizing the cuckoo's voice, serves to confirm a remark of Pater's: "Clear and delicate, at

once, as he is in outlining of visible imagery, he is more clear and delicate still, and finely scrupulous in the noting of sounds." Cf. *The Solitary Reaper*.

6. **twofold.** Consisting of two notes, as represented in the name of the bird; cf. "twin notes inseparably paired" (*Sonnet to the Cuckoo*).

9-12. The text is that of the ed. of 1827; in 1807 we find :

To me, no Babbler with a tale  
Of sunshine and of flowers,  
Thou tellest, Cuckoo in the Vale  
Of visionary hours.

In 1815 :

I hear thee babbling to the vale  
Of sunshine and of flowers;  
And unto me thou bring'st a tale, etc.

12. **visionary hours.** Hours which were full of visions,—hours when the imagination was at work.

18-24. The cuckoo is a shy and restless bird, not easily seen.

31. **faery.** A variant of the more usual word *fairy*; the form *faery* is connected with Spenser's great poem, and is here specially appropriate as suggesting his meaning of the word pertaining to the region of the ideal and of imagination; whereas *fairy* is rather suggestive of the more trivial ideas connected with the fanciful beings of childish story.

### TO THE DAISY.

This is one of three poems addressed to the same flower, which were written in 1802 at Town-end, Grasmere; it was first published in 1807.

1-3. The first edition differed in l. 2 :

A Pilgrim bold in Nature's care.

In 1827 and 1832, l. 3 :

And oft the long year through, the heir

In 1837 we find :

Confiding Flower, by Nature's care  
Made bold,—who, lodging here and there,  
Art all the long year through the heir.

6. **Some concord.** In 1837, "communion"; but all earlier and later editions read as in the text.

8. **thorough.** *Thorough* and *through* are variants of the same word; cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 3: "Thorough brush, thorough brier." Cf. note on *The Ancient Mariner*, l. 64.

9. This is the reading of the earliest and latest editions ; the editions of 1827 and 1832 read : “ And wherefore ? Man is soon deprest ? ”

17-24. This stanza was omitted in editions 1827 and 1832, but is in all the other editions.

23. In what respects the Daisy’s function is apostolical is indicated in the previous lines of this stanza.

“ To Shelley,” says Professor Dowden, “ a flower is a thing of light and love,—bright with its yearning, pale with passion. To Thomson a flower is an object which has a certain shape and colour. To Wordsworth a flower is a living partaker of the common spiritual life and joy of being.”

### THE GREEN LINNET.

Composed in 1803, in the orchard at Dove Cottage, Grasmere ; published in 1807.

Prof. Dowden quotes from Wintringham’s *Birds of Wordsworth* : “ Of all English birds, the green finch—or the green grosbeak—is best adapted to its position in nature. Its colour makes it almost imperceptible to all who are not adepts in ornithology. The bright gamboge yellow of its primary feathers and the bright golden green of the least wing-coverts do not foil the hiding powers of its other plumage, but rather complete than destroy the bird’s perfect adaptation.”

A green linnet is not in itself the subject of the poem, but is made use of as connected with, or symbolizing an emotion in the poet. Here, as often, the title does not indicate the real theme ; the true subject of this poem, the stimulus which leads the poet to write it, is the joy which he feels at the renewal of nature in spring. The poem is a simple illustration of the distinguishing excellence of Wordsworth’s work as described by Matthew Arnold in the passage quoted on p. 142.

The poem before us is perfectly simple ; there is no moral drawn, no hidden meaning. It merely recalls, expresses, intensifies for us the joy we have all felt on a perfect day of spring when

Once more the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new.

On such a day it is enough to live. We seek no reason for our happiness ; it is pure sympathy with nature. On such a day alone, the ordinary man perhaps vividly feels that which Wordsworth so continually felt, and which lies at the basis of his nature poetry—that there is

between us and nature a sympathy like that between man and man, and thus nature becomes transformed from mere matter to something pulsating with a spirit akin to our own.

In the opening stanza the poet sufficiently indicates the occasion, so that we may catch his feeling. Then among the many tokens of spring which surround him, he seizes on the linnet as most adequately symbolizing for him the joy of the season. Why the linnet is chosen, is sufficiently indicated in the poem, more especially in the 2nd and 3rd stanzas.

The predominant note of perfect contentment with actual and present things is eminently typical of Wordsworth's poetry, and may be contrasted with Shelley's unsatisfied yearning, and Keats' escape to an ideal scene as exhibited in their well-known bird-poems.

Note the aptness of the stanza-form to the feeling ; the most noticeable peculiarities are the three successive rhyming lines, and the double rhymes in 4th and 8th lines. Both these peculiarities contribute to the liveliness of the movement.

1-8. In 1807 this stanza read :

The May is come again ;—how sweet  
To sit upon my Orchard seat !  
And Birds and Flowers once more to greet,  
    My last year's Friends together ;  
My thoughts they all by turns employ,  
A whispering Leaf is now my joy,  
And then a Bird will be the toy  
    That doth my fancy tether.

In 1815 and in subsequent editions, the stanza reads as in the text, except that until 1827 we find "flowers and birds," instead of "birds and flowers."

15. With a reference, probably, to the celebration of May 1st ; cf. Tennyson's *May Queen*, and Shakespeare's *Mids. Night's Dream*.

18. *paramours*. As the word is ordinarily pronounced, the rhyme is defective. In ll. 28 and 32, 36 and 40 the rhyme is also imperfect, but, owing to the separation of the lines, these licenses are less objectionable. The word was not originally, and is not here, used in any bad sense ; cf. *Faerie Queene*, II, ix. 34, and Wordsworth's *Hart Leap Well*:

And in the summer-time when days are long,  
    I will come hither with my paramour ;  
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song  
    We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

25. *Amid*. Until 1845 "Upon."

33-40. In 1807 the reading was :

While thus before my eyes he gleams,  
A Brother of the Leaves he seems ;  
When in a moment forth he teems  
His little song in gushes ;  
As if it pleased him to disdain  
And mock the form which he did feign,  
While he was dancing with the train  
Of leaves among the bushes.

In 1820 the sixth line of this stanza became :

The voiceless form he chose to feign.

In 1827 :

My sight he dazzles, half deceives,  
A bird so like the dancing Leaves.

with the remainder as in the text, except that "when" stood for "while" in line 39. After some slight changes in subsequent editions the present text was given in 1845.

### THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Written between Sept. 13th, 1803, and May, 1805, when Dorothy Wordsworth copied it into her journal ; first published 1807. The following entry is from Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal under date Sept. 13 : "As we descended [they were near Loch Voil] the scene became more fertile, our way being pleasantly varied—through coppices or open fields, and passing farm-houses, though always with an inter-mixture of uncultivated ground. It was harvest-time, and the fields were quietly—might I be allowed to say pensively?—enlivened by small companies of reapers. It is not uncommon in the more lonely parts of the Highlands to see a single person so employed. The following poem was suggested to William by a beautiful sentence in Thomas Wilkinson's 'Tour of Scotland.' " The following is the sentence referred to : "Passed a female who was reaping alone ; she sung in Erse as she bended over her sickle ; the sweetest human voice I ever heard ; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more."

Mr. A. J. George (*Selections from Wordsworth*) thus comments on this poem :—

"What poet ever produced such beauty and power with so simple materials ! The maiden, the latest lingerer in the field, is the medium through which the romance of Highland scenery, and the soul of solitary

Highland life is revealed to us ; even her voice seems a part of nature, so mysteriously does it blend with the beauty of the scene. It is to such influences as this that the poet refers in the lines,—

And impulses of higher birth  
Have come to him in solitude."

10. Before 1827 :

So sweetly to reposing bands,

"Wordsworth believed that he had used the word 'sweet' to excess throughout his poems, and in 1827 he removed it from ten passages ; in later editions from fifteen additional passages." (*Dowden.*)

13. The reading of the text was introduced in 1837 ; in 1807 this line read :

No sweeter voice was ever heard.

In 1827 :

Such thrilling voice was never heard.

Cf. *To the Cuckoo*, and the opening lines of his sonnet to the same bird :

Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard  
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill  
Like the first summons, cuckoo ! of thy bill.

15. Cf. Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* :

And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea.

18. **numbers.** The stock poetical word for 'poetry.'

19. Professor Dowden quotes from the entry in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal, which includes this poem : " William here conceived the notion of writing an ode upon the affecting subject of those relics of human society found in that grand and solitary region."

27. Note that the 3rd line of the stanza does not rhyme here, as it does in the previous stanzas.

29. Before 1820 :

I listen'd till I had my fill.

30. **As.** "When" in the editions 1827-32.

#### "SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT."

Composed 1804, published 1807. "Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The germ of this poem was four lines, composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious." (*Wordsworth's note.*)

Wordsworth himself says that these versés refer to his wife. (See Knight's *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 306.) They are written, then, of a particular individual, but also, as all true poetry, serve to embody a more general truth—the successive stanzas represent three phases of man's view of, and attitude towards, woman.

The vision of woman contained in the first stanza presents her as perhaps she most frequently appears in lyric poetry, and as she is apt to appear to dawning passion. The vision is charming, but, to say the least, altogether incomplete, and based less upon actual fact than upon the workings of fancy. Closer knowledge and more intimate companionship, while not destroying this poetic charm, reveal the more substantial reality of her character. She, too, belongs to this world, and is human, and for these reasons gains stronger hold upon the heart. In the final stanza she appears as seen after the fullest knowledge given by the association of years. There is less of romance, but a more profound admiration and respect. She is no longer a phantom to haunt and stimulate the fancy; she presents herself in her functions as a wife and mother; yet still, as at every stage, she belongs in a measure to the ideal, and draws us towards it,—“Das ewig weibliche sieht uns hinan.”

1-4. “The ‘four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl’ were doubtless the first four lines of the first stanza.” (Knight.)

8. This is the original and also the later reading, but the edition of 1836 read:

From May-time's brightest, liveliest dawn,

22. **machine.** “The use of the word ‘machine’ . . . has been much criticised. For a similar use of the term see the sequel to *The Waggoner*. The progress of mechanical industry in Britain since the beginning of the present century has given a more limited and purely technical meaning to the word than it bore when Wordsworth used it in these two instances.” (Knight.) “Does Wordsworth mean by machine merely the body, as Hamlet does in his signature of the letter to Ophelia: ‘Thine . . . whilst this machine is to him’? I rather think the whole woman with all her household routine is conceived as the organism of which the thoughtful soul is the animating principle. In Bartram’s *Travels*, a book which Wordsworth used for his *Ruth*, I find the following: ‘At the return of the morning by the powerful influence of light, the pulse of nature becomes more active, and the

universal vibration of life insensibly and irresistibly moves the wondrous machine.' " (*Dowden's note.*)

30. of angelic light. Before 1845 : "of an angel light."

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### ODE TO DUTY.

Written 1805 ; first published 1807. Wordsworth says : "This ode is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which is, in turn, an imitation of Horace's *Ode to Fortune*" [*Odes*, I, 35].

This is one of the finest examples of Wordsworth's power to elevate the homely and commonplace into the highest poetic sphere. In this case he throws the charm of imagination and sentiment, not about a person, or object, or incident of life, but about a feeling—a commonplace and, to the poetic temperament especially, a painful and oppressive feeling—that of moral obligation, that something ought to be done. But for Wordsworth this ever-present element of life is desirable and beautiful, —a source of happiness and strength. Nor is there anything (as is often the case with the views of poets) fanciful, or overstrained, or abnormal in his conception ; it is based upon sound sense and upon daily experience. The Ode is an example of what Matthew Arnold held to be the true function of poetry,—"the criticism of life,"—"the powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life" ; it is not didactic in tone, it does not preach ; it quickens the moral nature by the contagion of noble enthusiasm, by the power of insight and of truth.

It will be noted that in the poem, three possible attitudes towards duty seem before the writer's mind : (1) when what is right is done, not upon reflection and because it is right, but from natural impulse, because it is the congenial thing to do ; this condition he characteristically ascribes to youth, when the innate tendencies (which he regards as good) have not yet been weakened and corrupted by the experiences of life ; but this, though a delightful, is also but a transient and uncertain condition ; 2nd (the ordinary state of things), when right is done with struggle and against the grain ; 3rd—the highest condition as hinted in the Latin motto—when through custom, through the continued obedience to duty based upon reason and upon the perception that to do right is true happiness, duty has become second nature ; when what we would do and what we ought to do are the same, when service becomes perfect freedom.\*

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\* Of. Tennyson's *Enone* :

the full-grown will  
Circled through all experience, pure law  
Commeasure perfect freedom.

The Latin motto may be translated: "Good no longer by resolve, but brought by habit to such a point that I am not merely able to do right, but am *not* able to do otherwise."

1. Cf. the opening line of Gray's *Ode*, "Daughter of Jove, relentless power."

7. **vain temptations.** Temptations to vanity, *i.e.*, to what is empty, not *real*, but only apparent good.

8. The reading of 1815 and subsequent editions; in 1807 the line stood:

From strife and from despair; a glorious ministry.

9. **There are who.** An imitation of the familiar Latin idiom, *sunt qui*.

9-14. Sometimes what is right is performed, not under any sense of restraint, or because it is our duty, but from natural good feeling.

12. Wordsworth habitually glorified the early natural impulses and feelings. Cf. *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, and the sonnet beginning "It is a beauteous evening,"

**genial.** Inborn, belonging to nature.

15-16. The reading in the text was introduced in 1837. In 1807 the lines stood:

May joy be theirs while life shall last!

And Thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast!

in 1827:

Long may the kindly impulse last!

But Thou, etc.

19-20. Referring to the condition of things described in the previous stanza, when the right is done because it is *desirable* and *pleasurable* to us. "Joy is its own security," because joy (pleasure) leads us to do that which in its turn begets pleasure, and not pain, as would be the case if our impulses led us to do evil.

21-22. Before 1827:

And bless'd are they who in the main  
This faith, even now, do entertain.

24. This reading dates from 1845; in 1807 the reading was: "Yet find that other strength"; in 1837: "Yet find thy firm support."

25. Cf. *The Prelude*, VI, 32-35:

That over-love of freedom  
Which encouraged me to turn  
From regulations even of my own  
As from restraints and bonds.

29-31. This reading was adopted in 1827 ; in 1807 the lines stood :

Resolved that nothing e'er should press  
Upon my present happiness,  
I shoved unwelcome tasks away ;

in 1815 :

Full oft, when in my heart was heard  
My timely mandate, I deferred  
The task imposed, from day to day :

37. unchartered freedom. Unrestricted freedom ; cf. *As You Like It*, II, vii, 47-8 :

I must have liberty  
Withal, as large a charter as the wind.

Prof. Knight compares Churchill's line : "An Englishman in chartered freedom born," and doubtless the word was suggested to Wordsworth in connection with political freedom ; an Englishman's freedom is not power to do just as he likes ; it is constitutional, or chartered freedom.

38. Even the very young know something of this weight in holiday times, when there has been, during a prolonged period, an absence of fixed employments, and of calls which must be attended to.

39-40. I have become wearied of pursuing, now one hope or aim, now another, and desire the calmness which comes from seeking a single object—to do right.

At this point in the edition of 1807 there follows a stanza omitted in all subsequent editions :

Yet not the less could I throughout  
Still act according to the voice  
Of my own wish ; and feel past doubt  
That my submissiveness was choice :  
Not seeking in the school of pride  
For " precepts over-dignified,"  
Denial and restraint I prize  
No farther than they breed a second Will more wise.

44. The satisfaction that accompanies the consciousness of having done right.

46. The idea of flowers springing up beneath the foot is a common one with the poets ; the editors cite Persius, *Satire*, ii, 38 : *Quidquid calcarerit hic, rosa fiat* ; and Hesiod, *Theogony*, 194-5 : *ἀμφὶ δὲ ποίη ποσσὶν ὅποι παυοῖσιν ἀέξατο*, 'thick sprouted the grass beneath the slender feet' (of the goddess) ; so Tennyson's *Oenone*, l. 94, and *Maud*, I, xii, 5.

45-48. The idea of duty is here extended from obedience to moral, to

obedience, to natural law—an identification especially natural to a poet who finds so close a kinship between man and nature about him. Webb compares Wordsworth's *Gypsies*, ll. 21-2:

Oh better wrong and strife  
(By nature transient) than this torpid life ;  
*Life which the very stars reprove.*  
*As on their silent tasks they move*

An earlier text of this ode has been discovered in a proof copy of the sheets of 1807. It is interesting to note the great improvement Wordsworth made while the poem was passing through the press; the earlier version also serves to throw light upon the meaning of the later. The following are the first four stanzas :

There are who tread a blameless way  
In purity, and love, and truth,  
Though resting on no better stay  
Than on the genial sense of youth :  
Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot,  
Who do the right, and know it not :  
May joy be theirs while life shall last,  
And may a genial sense remain, when youth is past.

Serene would be our days and bright,  
And happy would our nature be,  
If Love were an unerring light ;  
And Joy its own security.  
And bless'd are they who in the main,  
This creed, even now, do entertain,  
Do in this spirit live ; yet know  
That Man hath other hopes ; strength which elsewhere must grow.

I, loving freedom and untried ;  
No sport of every random gust,  
Yet being to myself a guide,  
Too blindly have reposed my trust :  
Resolv'd that nothing e'er should press  
Upon my present happiness,  
I shov'd unwelcome tasks away :  
But henceforth I would serve ; and strictly if I may.

O Power of DUTY ! sent from God  
To enforce on earth his high behest,  
And keep us faithful to the road  
Which Conscience hath pronounc'd the best :  
Thou, who art Victory and Law  
When empty terrors overawe ;  
From vain temptations doth set free  
From Strife, and from Despair, a glorious ministry !

## ELEGIAC STANZAS.

Written 1805; published 1807. The form of stanza adopted is that usually termed *Elegiac*, familiar through Gray's *Elegy*; the matter is also in some measure elegiac from the constant reference to the death of the poet's brother John. He was drowned while in command of the East India ship, *The Earl of Abergavenny*, which through the incompetence of the pilot, on leaving Portland struck upon a reef and was lost, Feb. 6, 1805. The previous autumn he had visited his brother at Grasmere. See *To the Daisy* ("Sweet Flower, belike one day to have") for an account of the disaster and also the *Elegiac Stanzas in Memory of My Brother*. Wordsworth says in a letter: "The vessel 'struck' at 5 p.m. Guns were fired immediately, and were continued to be fired. She was gotten off the rock at half-past seven, but had taken so much water, in spite of constant pumping, as to be water-logged. They had, however, hope that she might be run upon Weymouth sands, and with this view continued pumping and bailing till eleven, when she went down. . . . A few minutes before the ship went down my brother was seen talking to the first mate with apparent cheerfulness; he was standing at the point where he could overlook the whole ship the moment she went down—dying, as he had lived, in the very place and point where his duty called him. . . . I never wrote a line without the thought of giving *him* pleasure; my writings were his delight, and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages. But let me stop. I will not be cast down; were it only for his sake I will not be dejected."

The Peele Castle referred to is not the well-known one on the Isle of Man, but another, the name of which is usually spelled *Piel*, on the coast of Lancashire, near Barrow-in-Furness, and opposite the village of Rampside, where the poet spent four weeks of a vacation in 1794 (see ll. 1-2 of the poem). Sir George Beaumont, an intimate friend of Wordsworth, and in his own day a landscape painter of some note, painted two pictures of this castle, one of which was designed for Mrs. Wordsworth.

4. sleeping. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 54: "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank."

8. It trembled. Cf. *Influence of Natural Objects*, l. 20.

14-16. The reading in the text is that of the first edition as well as of 1832 and subsequent editions. In 1820, however, for these masterly lines the poet substituted:

and add a gleam  
Of lustre, known to neither sea or land  
But borrowed from the youthful poet's dream.

which were retained in 1827 with the change, "the gleam, The lustre."

What the poet refers to, is the element that is added by the artist to every object he artistically depicts ; he does not represent it exactly as it is, but contributes something from his own imagination—gives a charm, a beauty, a meaning to the object which he feels and puts there, and which is not present in the object itself.

21-24. This stanza with "a mine," instead of "divine," appeared in 1807 and 1815 ; it was omitted in 1820 and restored in its present form in 1845.

26. *Elysian quiet.* Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, vii, 37-8 :

And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil  
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

29. *illusion.* In 1807 "delusion."

33-36. Cf. *Tintern Abbey*, l. 88, ff.:

For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue.

also the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, 176, ff.

What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now forever taken from my sight,  
Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind ;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be ;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering ;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

53-56. Cf. Tennyson's *Palace of Art*, where the life of sympathy with men is placed above the life that is devoted wholly to beauty, knowledge, and self-culture.

54. *the Kind.* The human race.

SEPTEMBER, 1819.

Written in 1819; published in 1820.

This and the following poem exemplify Wordsworth's later style. "The most characteristic earlier and most characteristic later style are alike in the limpid coolness of their effect—the effect in the earlier style of bubbling waters, in the later of morning dew. Both alike lay the dust, and take us out of the fret of life, and restore the truth to feeling and cast over the vision of the universe

The image of a poet's heart  
How bright, how solemn, how serene !

... In the later style ... objective fact is much less prominent [than in the earlier]; bald moralities tend to take the place of bald realities; and, though the buoyancy is much diminished, emotion is much more freely, frankly, and tenderly expressed, so that there is often in it a richness and mellowness of effect quite foreign to Wordsworth's earlier mood." (Hutton.)

1. **sylvan.** A favourite word in the artificial poetry which preceded Wordsworth, and hence an example of the diction which Wordsworth usually shuns. *Sylvan* is often loosely used for 'rural,' as perhaps here, but properly means what belongs to the woods :

Cedar, and pine and fir, and branching palm,  
A sylvan scene.

*Paradise Lost*, iv, 140.

7. **sooth.** 'Truth'; cf. Chaucer, *Prologue*, 284: "But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle."

20. **vespers.** Properly 'evening service' (cf. note on *The Ancient Mariner*, l. 76), hence 'closing service.'

29. **radiant Seraphim.** Cf. note on *The Ancient Mariner*, l. 490.

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#### UPON THE SAME OCCASION.

Prof. Dowden quotes from Wordsworth's *Description of the English Lakes*: "But it is in autumn that days of such affecting influence most frequently intervene;—the atmosphere seems refined, and the sky rendered more crystalline, as the vivifying heat of the year abates; the lights and shadows are more delicate; the colouring is richer and more finely harmonized; and in this season of stillness, the ear being unoccupied, the sense of vision becomes more susceptible of its appropriate enjoyments."

**9. redbreast.** A different bird from our robin ; it is one of the birds that winter in England.

**14-15. Cf. Macbeth, V :**

My way of life  
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.

**16-17.** In Greece and Rome it was customary on festive occasions to wear about the head wreaths of various leaves and flowers, especially roses and myrtles ; cf. Horace, *Odes*, I, xxxviii ; Ovid, *Fasti*, V, l. 335.

**31-36.** Wordsworth here regards the Druids as the earliest British poets ; their temples were groves of oak and their worship connected with nature ; so that the word 'Druid' has been occasionally poetically employed for a poet of nature ; cf. Collins' *Lines on the Death of Mr. Thomson* [the author of *The Seasons*] : "In yonder grove a Druid lies."

**38. Alcæus.** A native of Lesbos, flourished about B.C. 611, one of the earliest Greek lyric poets who succeeded especially in warlike songs.

**46. Lesbian Maid.** Sappho, Greek poetess, a contemporary of Alcæus, famous for her love poems and her love-story.

**47. Before 1827**

With passion's finest finger swayed.

**48. Æolian lute.** Early Greek lyric poetry developed in the district of Æolia on the west shores of Asia Minor, south of the Troad. Both Alcæus and Sappho belonged to this district.

**50. Herculanean lore.** The cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii were buried by an eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. ; when rediscovered and excavated many centuries later, a great variety of interesting remains of antiquity were unearthed, works of art, etc.

**52. Theban fragment.** Some fragment from the works of Pindar, the greatest of Greek lyric poets. He was a native of Thebes and flourished about 500 B.C.

**54. Simonides.** Another lyric poet, contemporary of Pindar. "Simonides himself became proverbial for that virtue which the Greeks call *σωφροσύνη*, temperance, order, and self-command in one's own conduct, and moderation in one's opinions, and desires and views of human life ; and this spirit breathes through his poetry." (*Smith's Biographical Dictionary*.)

**59. Maro.** Virgil.

## TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH.

Written and published in 1820, addressed to the poet's brother Christopher, at that time rector of Lambeth, subsequently Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. The poem refers to the familiar English custom of the village choir singing and playing anthems from house to house on Christmas eve.

5-6. An example of the poet's close observation of nature.

42. Of the children.

49-50. The fields and streams about Cockermouth and Hawkshead.

51. **Cytherea's zone.** "Cytherea, a name for Venus, who was said to have sprung from the foam of the sea near Cythera, now Cerigo, an island on the south-east of the Morea. On her zone, or cestus, were represented all things tending to excite love." (*Dowden.*)

52. **the Thunderer.** Jupiter.

55-60. In his later life Wordsworth grew strongly conservative.

65. **Lambeth's venerable towers.** Lambeth palace on the banks of the Thames in greater London, the official residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury.

73-4. A fine example of the poet's masterly diction.

## TO A SKYLARK.

Written in 1825 at Rydal Mount; first published in 1827. In 1845, the second stanza was transferred to *A Morning Exercise*, and Wordsworth said to Miss Fenwick: "I could wish the last five stanzas of this to be read with the poem addressed to the skylark."

Dr. Sykes quotes Mr. John Burroughs' *Birds and Poets* where he speaks of the skylark as "a creature of light and air and motion, the companion of the plowman, the shepherd, the harvester, whose nest is in the stubble and whose tryst is in the clouds. Its life affords that kind of contrast which the imagination loves—one moment a plain, pedestrian bird, hardly distinguishable from the ground, the next a soaring, untiring songster, revelling in the upper air, challenging the eye to follow him and the ear to separate his notes." In addition to these peculiarities, the reader should know that it is the habit of the lark to sing early in the morning, and to rise singing directly above its nest until it vanishes from sight.

The poem is a fine example of Wordsworth's later moralizing vein with its tendency to draw an explicit lesson. He finds in the song and habits of the skylark a sort of symbolism of what he himself held to be the true spirit, the best inspiration, and the highest function of poetry. The reader will do well to work this parallelism between the bird and the poet out in detail. A suggestive contrast to this poem is afforded by Shelley's *To A Skylark* where this poet, no less than Wordsworth, finds in the song of the skylark an embodiment of his own spirit and genius, different as these are from Wordsworth's.

13. Cf. Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*.

14. Cf. Shelley's *Skylark*, ll. 36-37 :

Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought.

16. *instinct*. In 1827 "rapture."

18. Prof. Dowden compares Hogg's *The Lark*:

Thy love is in heaven—thy love is on earth

and Wordsworth's *Prelude*, XIV, ll. 382-387 :

... and hence this Song, which like a lark  
I have protracted in the unwearied heavens  
Singing, and often with more plaintive voice  
To earth attempered and her deep-drawn sighs,  
Yet centring all in love.

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### SONNETS.

The Sonnet is a poem consisting of fourteen pentameter lines, and these lines are, by means of rhyme, combined in a certain fixed way. The first four lines form a quatrain (i.e., a four-lined stanza), with the first and last lines rhyming, and also the second and third. The next four lines also form a quatrain of exactly the same structure; and these two quatrains are united by having common rhymes. The rhyme-scheme may therefore be represented as a b b a a b b a.\* The eight lines being thus linked together are felt as a whole, and are called the *octave*. The remaining six lines, in a regular sonnet, are not connected by rhyme with the octave, but rhyme together in such a way as also to be felt as belonging to one another; they are called the *sestette*. The sestette con-

\* English poets take great liberties with the form, and in some sonnets the arrangement of rhymes is different; but the order given above is the accepted one, and is also the most usual and, other things being equal, the most effective.

tains three, or two, different rhymes ; the arrangement of the rhymes is left very free, provided only the result be that the sestette is felt as forming a metrical whole. So, for example, with two rhymes a common arrangement is d e d e d e ; or with three rhymes d e f d e f ; but the arrangement d e d e f f is not held to be a good one in the regular sonnet ; because the final couplet is naturally felt as standing apart from the rest, and the sonnet loses its characteristic effect. In the regular form here described a great many beautiful poems have been written, not merely in English, but in other European languages, especially in Italian, where the sonnet originated.

The sonnet, from the point of view of form, is, as compared with other poems, markedly a whole made up of parts. It has shape, as a Greek pillar, with its base, shaft and capital, has shape. There is no reason in *form* why a poem written in couplets or stanzas should not end at any stanza, at the twelfth line, for example, rather than the sixteenth. In form, it is a mere repetition of similar parts ; and, accordingly, it often happens that lyrics written in quatrains have no particular beginning or end ; the poet keeps circling around some central feeling or thought, there is no marked development. On the contrary, the form of the sonnet, as well as its music with the flow and ebb, manifestly lends itself to developed thought—to the expression of ideas which start somewhere and end in some conclusion. Such thought is, other things being equal, more interesting and artistic, than thought which makes no progress ; just as a story with developed plot is more artistic and interesting than a series of loosely-connected scenes. The sonnet therefore is, by its form, suited to the expression of some poetic conception which can be briefly expressed and yet is progressive,—has unity, and development, a beginning, middle, and conclusion. As the form falls into two parts, so also will the thought. The octave will contain the introduction, the circumstances, etc., which give rise to, or serve to explain, the main idea or feeling. The sestette will give expression to this main idea ; and the character of the thought of the concluding lines of the sestette will be such as to indicate that the poem is closing. As the octave consists of two parts, so often will the thought of the introduction divide itself into two parts or stages. Again, the reader cannot but feel that the form of the sonnet is very elaborate, and somewhat rigid. So a sonnet is not fitted to express a strong gush of emotion, or intensity of feeling—such as we often find in the ordinary lyric. Burns' songs forced into sonnet-form would quite lose their characteristic flavour of spontaneity, passion, or humour. In the

sonnet, too, the movements of line and stanza are slow and dignified. Hence the sonnet is specially adapted to the expression of thoughtful, meditative moods. "When an emotion," says Theodore Watts-Dunton, very admirably, "is either too deeply charged with thought, or too much adulterated with fancy, to pass spontaneously into the movements of a pure lyric" it is appropriately "embodied in the single metrical flow and return" of a sonnet. As the form of this species of poem compels brevity and suggests premeditation and effort; so we expect weight and condensation of thought, and exquisiteness of diction. And as it is a developed whole and, like a tragedy, has a certain culmination, we expect this condensation and weight and this perfection of workmanship, more especially in the sestette. If, on the other hand, there is no correspondence between thought and form in the sonnet, no appropriateness in the music, the whole thing seems a useless piece of artificiality, little more interesting than an acrostic.

We have given the broad principles of sonnet construction as borrowed from the Italian; but English writers, as already indicated, have treated the form at times very freely, and departed even from these more general rules. One variant developed by Elizabethan writers and adopted by Shakespeare, is so marked a deviation from the original as almost to constitute a different species of poem. Its structure is simple; it consists of three quatrains, each consisting of lines rhyming alternately, followed by a couplet. The rhyme-scheme is, therefore, a b a b, c d c d, e f e f, g g. Looking at the form of this poem, one might either say it consisted either of four, or of two, parts. In practice, the difference between the three quatrains on the one hand, and the couplet on the other is so conspicuous that the poem seems naturally to fall rather into these two parts. The first twelve lines are introductory; within these twelve lines the thought may or may not be progressive; the last two lines contain the gist of the thought, the application or outcome of what has been given in the quatrains; they have the effect of climax or epigram. It very often happens, however, that the first eight lines are introductory, as in the regular sonnet; the next four develop the thought towards the conclusion; while the couplet drops in the keystone, as it were, which completes and holds together the whole. Regular sonnets have been compared, in their movement, to the rise and fall of a billow, to "a rocket ascending in the air, breaking into light, and falling in a soft shower of brightness." The Shakespearian sonnet, on the other hand, has been likened to a "red-hot bar being moulded upon a forge till—in the closing couplet—it receives the final clinching blow from a heavy hammer."

The sonnet was introduced into English from the Italian towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII, by Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey; and was very commonly employed in the Elizabethan period, in the form which we call Shakespearian, or in some other of the looser rhyme arrangements. Milton was the last great sonnet writer of the epoch, and usually approached the Italian model more closely than his predecessors. With the Restoration, the sonnet practically ceased to be written, but began to re-appear simultaneously with the new poetic tendencies about the middle of the 18th century. It was, for example, the favourite form of the poet Bowles (see p. 76 above) who influenced both Coleridge and Wordsworth. Wordsworth employed the sonnet more frequently than perhaps any other poet, and often with great success. As a meditative poet whose reflections are suggested usually by some external appearance, the form exactly suits him, and its brevity insures him against the prolixity into which he too often falls.\*

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#### COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE, NEAR CALAIS.

First published in 1807. Taking advantage of the Peace of Amiens, Wordsworth and his sister visited France in the summer of 1802. The following extract is from Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal: "We arrived at Calais at four o'clock on Sunday morning, the 31st of July. We had delightful walks after the heat of the day was passed—seeing far off in the west the coast of England, like a cloud, crested with Dover Castle, the evening star, and the glory of the sky; the reflections in the water were more beautiful than the sky itself; purple waves brighter than precious stones, forever melting upon the sands."

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#### WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

"This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. This must be borne in mind, or else the reader may think that in this and the succeeding sonnets I have exaggerated the mischief engendered and fostered among us by undisturbed wealth." (*Wordsworth's note.*) First published in 1807.

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\* Some sonnets by writers other than Wordsworth may be found in the *Appendix* to this volume.

1. In the edition of 1838 and in that only, this line read

O thou proud city ! which way shall I look.

**Friend.** According to Prof. Dowden, the friend was Coleridge.

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LONDON, 1802.

Written 1802 ; first published 1807. For what gave rise to this poem see Wordsworth's note on the preceding sonnet. Milton was not a poet merely but a man who in his private life strenuously pursued high ideals, and by his writings strove to foster them in the country.

4. The hall was the main apartment in a castle, associated therefore with the life of the men and external relations ; the bower was specially the room for ladies and for privacy.

8. **manners.** In its broader and nobler sense like the Latin *mores*, conduct.

10. Cf. Tennyson :

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,  
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for ages.

---

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF."

Written 1802 or 1803, when an invasion by Napoleon was expected ; printed in the *Morning Post*, April 16, 1803, and in the Poems of 1807.

4. The quotation is from an Elizabethan poet, Daniel's *Civil War*, II, vii.

5-6. The lines in the text were substituted in 1827 for

Road by which all might come and go that would,  
And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands.

"The opposition between 'British freedom' and what he deemed its 'salutary bonds' would naturally occur to Wordsworth in days not long before Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill." (Dowden.)

---

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY."

Written 1802 or 1803. First printed in the *Morning Post*, Sept. 15, 1803, and included in the volume of 1807.

2-4. The idea that a society which becomes prevailing commercial instead of warlike in its pursuits is at the same time apt to degenerate

is a very old and common one in literature ; cf., e.g., Tennyson's *Maud*, or Bacon, *On the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*.

6. **now.** Before 1845 "But."

9. **For.** Before 1845 "But," except in 1838 "Most."

---

### COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

The date following the title was inserted by the poet himself, who added : "Written on the roof of a coach on my way to France." But Knight shows that this date is inaccurate. "He left London for Dover on his way to Calais on the 30th of July, 1802. The sonnet was written that morning as he travelled towards Dover. The following is the record of the journey in his sister's diary : 'July 30—Left London between five and six o'clock of the morning outside the Dover coach. A beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river—a multitude of boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed *Westminster Bridge* ; the houses not overhung by their clouds of smoke, and were spread out endlessly ; yet the sun shone brightly with such a pure light that there was something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles.'"

First published 1807.

Rolfe quotes, in connection with this sonnet, from Caroline Fox's *Memories of old Friends* : "Mamma spoke of the beauty of Rydal, and asked whether it did not rather spoil him [Wordsworth] for common scenery. 'O, no,' he said, 'it rather opens my eyes to see the beauty there is in all ; God is everywhere, and thus nothing is common or devoid of beauty. No, ma'am, it is the *feeling* that instructs the seeing. Wherever there is a heart to feel, there is also an eye to see ; even in a city you have light and shade, reflections, probably views of the water and trees, and a blue sky above you, and can you want for beauty with all these ? People often pity me while residing in a city, but they need not, for I can enjoy its characteristic beauties as well as any.'"

4. Cf. *Psalm*, civ, 2. "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment."

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### THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

This sonnet was written towards the end of 1806, or in the beginning of 1807 by the poet while pacing to and fro between the Hall of Coleorton, the residence of his friend, Sir George Beaumont, and the principal

farm-house on the estate, where he was temporarily living. First published 1807. In 1808 Wordsworth considered this his best sonnet.

In 1802 Napoleon had crushed the liberties of Switzerland ; in 1807 he was preparing to invade England.

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### TO SLEEP.

Published in 1807 ; no other evidence of date.

5. In 1807-1820 :

I've thought of all by turns ; and still I lie

in 1827 and 1832 :

By turns have all been thought of ; yet I lie

in 1837-1843 :

I thought of all by turns, and yet I lie

except in 1838, when the line stood :

I have thought of all by turns and yet I lie

8. **cuckoo's melancholy cry.** Very different from "O blithe newcomer" (*To the Cuckoo*). It is the thinking and feeling mind that gives meaning to nature.

---

### "BROOK ! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS."

First published in 1815 ; no other evidence of date.

5. **waterbreaks.** Cf. *Nutting*, l. 33 and note thereon.

6. Before 1827 :

If I some type of thee did wish to view.

9. **Naiad.** The spirit of a stream, conceived among the Greeks and Romans as a beautiful woman crowned with flowers.

13. **safer.** Before 1845 "better."

---

### INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL.

First published among *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* in 1822. Written probably in 1820 when Wordsworth visited Cambridge, or later.

1. **the royal Saint.** The chapel was founded by King Henry VI who had a reputation for sanctity, referred to in Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton* (of which Henry was also founder) :

Where grateful science still adores  
Her Henry's holy shade.

See also Shakespeare, *Richard III*, V, i; and IV, iv.

4. **white-robed Scholars.** "At service on Saturday evenings, Sundays, and Saints' days, every member of the College, except the noblemen, has to appear in a white surplice, as though he were about to read the service." (*Everett's On the Cam*, p. 109.) Everett is speaking of Trinity College, but the practice doubtless holds of other Cambridge colleges.

10. **Self-poised.** Prof. Dowden quotes Fuller (1608-1661). "The chapel is one of the rarest fabrics in Christendom, wherein the stonework, woodwork, and glasswork contend which most deserve admiration. Yet the first generally carries away the credit (as being a Stonehenge indeed), so geometrically contrived that voluminous stones mutually support themselves in the arched roof, as if Art had made them to forget Nature, and weaned them from their fondness to descend to their centre." The explanation is, of course, that the principle of the arch is employed in the construction of the stone roof, and support is really given by the external buttresses.

11-12. **where music, etc.** Cf. Gray's *Elegy*:

Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

and Milton's *L'Allegro*:

In notes, with many a winding bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out.

---

#### THE SAME CONTINUED.

For composition and publication, see last sonnet.

6. **the wreath.** The reward of success.

8. **younger Pile.** St. Paul's. Westminster Abbey dates from the 13th century : St. Paul's was built 1675-1710.

12-14. **Westminster Abbey** is crowded with memorials to distinguished men ; St. Paul's is (and in Wordsworth's day the disproportion was greater) comparatively vacant.

## "SCORN NOT THE SONNET."

Published in 1827, and composed perhaps in the same year, "almost extempore in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake."

3. Shakespeare wrote a long connected series of sonnets, which, by the majority of critics, are held to express certain experiences and feelings of his own life.

4. **Petrarch.** (1304-74.) Italian poet, one of the earliest of the great names in modern literature, and the first to give vogue to the sonnet. His sonnets chiefly treat of his unrequited passion for a certain lady named *Laura*.

5. **Tasso.** (1544-95.) Italian poet, author of the epic *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, on the subject of Godfrey de Bouillon and the Crusaders.

6. Before 1837 "Camoëns soothed with it."

**Camoëns.** Portuguese poet who, in 1556 was banished to Macao, a Portuguese settlement in China, and there wrote many sonnets and lyrics. His chief work is the *Lusiad*.

7-9. **Dante.** (1265-1321.) A Florentine, the greatest of Italian poets, and one of the greatest of all poets; his chief work is the *Divine Comedy*, in which is presented a vision of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell (hence "visionary brow"); many of his sonnets are found in his *Vita Nuova*, written in his twenty-eighth year, at a happy epoch of his life (hence "gay myrtle leaf," the myrtle being emblematic of joy and love, as the "cypress" of sadness and death. See note on ll. 16-17, *Upon the Same Occasion*). His later life was passed in exile from his native city, and in sadness.

9-11. Spenser's sonnets, like Shakespeare's, form a series, and narrate the story of his love and marriage; they are not by any means his most successful work, and, while possessing charm and beauty, are greatly inferior in power to those of Shakespeare or Milton; hence, presumably, "mild glow-worm lamp."

**Faeryland.** The scene of his great poem, *The Faery Queen*.

**dark ways.** A reference to the misfortunes of his actual life; he was under the necessity of living in Ireland—which then meant an almost total banishment from society and the advantages of cultivated life; his house was sacked and burned, and he died in poverty in London.

11-12. Milton's sonnets, chiefly written between 1638 and 1658, "are the few occasional strains that connect as by intermittent trumpet blasts through twenty years, the rich minor poetry of his youth and early manhood with the greater poetry of his declining years." (*Masson.*) The word 'damp' is appropriate because the conflicts between king and parliament enforced him to quit the more congenial paths of poetry for the work of political and religious controversy.

14. **Soul-animating strains.** See, for example, those *On his Blindness*, *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*, *To Cromwell*.

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## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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### SELECTIONS FOR COMPARISON, ILLUSTRATION, AND “SIGHT READING.”

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#### 1.—SIR PATRICK SPENCE.

The King sits in Dumferling toune,  
Drinking his blude-reid wine :  
“O whar will I get guid sailor  
To sail this schip of mine ?”

Up and spake an eldern knicht,  
Sat at the kings richt kne :  
“Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor  
That sails upon the sea.”

The king has written a braid letter  
And signed it wi’ his hand,  
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,  
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,  
A loud lauch lauched he :  
The next line that Sir Patrick red,  
The teir blinded his ee.

“O wha is this has don this deid,  
This ill deid don to me ;  
To send me out this time o’ the yeir  
To sail upon the se ?

“Mak haste, mak haste, my mirry men all,  
Our guid schip sails the morne.”

“O say na sae, my master deir,  
For I feir a deadlie storme.

5

10

15

20

“ Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone  
 Wi’ the auld moone in hir arme ;  
 And I feir, I feir, my deir mastèr,  
 That we will com to harme,”

25

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith  
 To wet their cork-heild schoone ;  
 But lang owre a’ the play wer playd  
 Thair hats they swam aboone.

30

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,  
 Wi’ thair fans into their hand,  
 Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence  
 Cum sailing to the land.

35

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,  
 Wi’ thair gold kems in their hair,  
 Waiting for their ain deir lords,  
 For they’ll se thame na mair.

40

Have owre, have owre to Aberdour,  
 It’s fifty fadom deip ;  
 And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence  
 Wi’ the Scots lords at his feit.

—*From Percy’s “ Reliques.”*

## 2.—SIR CAULINE.

### THE FIRST PART.

In Ireland, ferr over the sea,  
 There dwelleth a bonnye kinge ;  
 And with him a yong and comlye knighte,  
 Men call him Syr Cauline.

The kinge had a ladye to his daughter,  
 In fashyon she hath no peere ;  
 And princely wightes that ladye wooed  
 To be theyr wedded feere.

5

Syr Cauline loveth her best of all,  
 But nothing durst he saye ;  
 Ne descreeve his counsayl to no man,  
 But deerlye he lovde this may.

10

Till on a daye it so beffell  
 Great dill to him was dight ;  
 The maydens love removde his mynd,  
 To care-bed went the knighte.

15

One while he spred his armes him fro,  
 One while he spred them nyne :  
 “ And aye ! but I winne that ladyes love,  
 For dole now I mun dye.”

20

And whan our parish-masse was done,  
 Our kinge was bowne to dyne :  
 He says, “ Where is Syr Cauline,  
 That is wont to serve the wyne ? ”

Then aunswerde him a courteous knighte,  
 And fast his handes gan wringe :  
 “ Syr Cauline is sicke, and like to dye,  
 Without a good leechinge.”

25

“ Fetche me downe my daughter deere,  
 She is a leeche fulle fine ;  
 Goe take him doughe, ank the baken bread,  
 And serve him with the wyne soe red :  
 Lothe I were him to tine.”

30

Fair Christabelle to his chaumber goes,  
 Her maydens followyng nyne ;  
 “ O well,” she sayth, “ how doth my lord ? ”  
 “ O sicke, thou fayr ladye.”

35

“ Nowe ryse up wightlye, man, for shame,  
 Never lye soe cowardlee ;  
 For it is told in my fathers halle,  
 You dye for love of mee.”

40

“ Fayre ladye, it is for your love  
 That all this dill I drye :  
 For if you wold comfort me with a kisse,  
 Then were I brought from bale to blisse,  
 No lenger wold I lye.”

45

“Syr Knighte, my father is a kinge,  
I am his onlye heire ;  
Alas ! and well you knowe, Syr Knighte,  
I never can be youre fere.”

50

“O layde, thow art a kinges daughter,  
And I am not thy peere ;  
But let me doe some deedes of armes  
To be your bacheleere.”

“Some deedes of armes if thou wilt doe,  
My bacheleere to bee,  
(But ever and aye my heart wold rue,  
Giff harm shold happe to thee,)

55

“Upon Eldridge hill there groweth a thorne,  
Upon the mores brodinge ;  
And dare ye, Syr Knighte, wake there all nighte,  
Untill the fayre morninge ?

60

“For the Eldridge knighte, so mickle of mighte,  
Will examine you beforne ;  
And never man bare life awaye,  
But he did him scath and scorne.

65

“That knighte he is a foul paynim,  
And large of limb and bone ;  
And but if heaven may be thy speede,  
Thy life it is but gone.”

70

“Nowe on the Eldridge hilles Ile walke,  
For thy sake, fair ladie ;  
And Ile either bring you a ready tokēn,  
Or Ile never more you see.”

The lady is gone to her own chaumbère,  
Her maydens following bright ;  
Syr Cauline lope from care-bed soone,  
And to the Eldridge hills is gone,  
For to wake there all night.

75

Unto midnight, that the moone did rise, 80  
 He walked up and downe ;  
 Then a lightsome bugle heard he blowe  
 Over the bents soe browne :  
 Quoth hee, “ If cryance come till my heart,  
 I am ffar from any good towne.” 85

And soone he spyde on the mores so broad  
 A furyous wight and fell ;  
 A ladye bright his brydle led,  
 Clad in a fayre kyrtell :  
 And soe fast he called on Syr Cauline, 90  
 “ O man, I rede thee flye,  
 For, ‘ but’ if cryance come till thy heart,  
 I weene but thou mun dye.”

He sayth, “ ‘ No’ cryance comes till my heart,  
 Nor, in faith, I wyll not flee ; 95  
 For, cause thou minged not Christ before,  
 The less me dreadeth thee.”

The Eldridge knighte, he pricked his steed ;  
 Syr Cauline bold abode :  
 Then either shooke his trustye speare,  
 And the timber these two children bare  
 Soe soone in sunder slode. 100

Then tooke they out theyr two good swordes,  
 And layden on full faste,  
 Till helme and hawberke, mail and sheelde,  
 They all were well-nye brast. 105

The Eldridge knight was mickle of might,  
 And stiffe in stower did stande ;  
 But Syr Cauline with a ‘ backward’ stroke,  
 He smote off his right-hand ; 110  
 That soone he, with paine and lacke of bloud,  
 Fell downe on that lay-land.

Then up Syr Cauline lift his brande  
 All over his head so hye :  
 “ And here I sweare by the holy roode,  
 Nowe, caytiffe, thou shalt dye.” 115

Then up and came that ladye brighte,  
 Faste wringing of her hande :  
 " For the maydens love that most you love,  
 Withold that deadlye brande : " 120

" For the maydens love that most you love,  
 Now smyte no more I praye ;  
 And aye whatever thou wilt, my lord,  
 He shall thy hests obaye. "

" Now sweare to mee, thou Eldridge knighte,  
 And here on this lay-land,  
 That thou wilt believe on Christ his laye,  
 And thereto plight thy hand : " 125

" And that thou never on Eldridge come  
 To sporte, gamon, or playe ;  
 And that thou here give up thy armes  
 Until thy dying daye. " 130

The Eldridge knighte gave up his armes  
 With many a sorrowfull sighe ;  
 And sware to obey Syr Caulines hest,  
 Till the tyme that he shold dye. 135

And he then up and the Eldridge knighte  
 Sett him in his saddle anone ;  
 And the Eldridge knighte and his ladye,  
 To theyr castle are they gone. 140

Then he tooke up the bloudy hand,  
 That was so large of bone,  
 And on it he founde five ringes of gold  
 Of knighting that had be slon. 145

Then he tooke up the Eldridge sworde,  
 As hard as any flint :  
 And he tooke off those ringes five,  
 As bright as fyre and brent.

Home then pricked Syr Cauline,  
 As light as leafe on tree ;  
 I-wys he neither stint ne blanne,  
 Till he his ladye see. 150

Then downe he knelt upon his knee,  
Before that lady gay :  
O ladye, I have bin on the Eldridge hills :  
These tokens I bring away.”

155

“Now welcome, welcome, Syr Cauline,  
Thrice welcome unto mee,  
For now I perceive thou art a true knighte,  
Of valour holde and free.”

160

“O ladye, I am thy own true knighte,  
Thy hests for to obaye ;  
And mought I hope to winne thy love !”—  
No more his tonge colde say.

The ladye blushed scarlette redde,  
And fette a gentill sigh :  
“Alas ! Syr Knight, how may this bee,  
For my degree’s soe highe ?

165

“But sith thou hast hight, thou comely youth,  
To be my batchilere,  
Ile promise, if thee I may not wedde,  
I will have none other fere.”

170

Then shee held forthe her lilly-white hand  
Towards that knighte so free ;  
He gave to it one gentill kisse,  
His heart was brought from bale to blisse,  
The teares sterte from his ee.

175

“But keep my counsayl, Syr Cauline,  
Ne let no man it knowe ;  
For, and ever my father sholde it ken,  
I wot he wolde us sloe.”

180

From that daye forthe, that ladye fayre  
Lovde Syr Cauline the knighte :  
From that daye forthe, he only joyde  
Whan shee was in his sight.

185

Yea, and oftentimes they mette  
 Within a fayre arboûre,  
 Where they, in love and sweet daliaunce,  
 Past manye a pleasaunt houre.

## PART THE SECOND.

Everye white will have its blacke,  
 And everye sweete its sowre :  
 This founde the Ladye Christabelle  
 In an untimely howre.

For so it befelle, as Syr Cauline  
 Was with that ladye faire,  
 The kinge, her father, walked forthe  
 To take the evenyng aire :

And into the arboure as he went  
 To rest his wearye feet,  
 He found his daughter and Syr Cauline  
 There sette in daliaunce sweet.

The kinge hee sterted forthe, i-wys,  
 And an angrye man was hee :  
 "Nowe, traytoure, thou shalt hange or drawe,  
 And rewe shall thy ladiè."

Then forthe Syr Cauline he was ledde,  
 And thrown in dungeon deepe :  
 And the ladye into a towre so hye,  
 There left to wayle and weepe.

The queene she was Syr Caulines friend,  
 And to the kinge sayd shee :  
 "I praye you save Syr Caulines life,  
 And let him banisht bee."

"Now, dame, that traitor shall be sent  
 Across the salt sea fome :  
 But here I will make thee a band,  
 If ever he come within this land,  
 A foule deathe is his doome."

5

10

15

20

25

All woe-begone was that gentil knight 30  
 To parte from his ladyè ;

And many a time he sighed sore,

And cast a wistfulle eye :

“ Faire Christabelle, from thee to parte,

Farre lever had I dye.” 35

Faire Christabelle, that ladye bright,

Was had forthe of the towre ;

But ever shee droopeth in her minde,

As, nipt by an ungentle wind,

Doth some faire lillye flowre. 40

And ever shee doth lament and weape

To tint her lover soe :

“ Syr Cauline, thou little think’st on mee,

But I will still be true.”

Manye a kinge, and manye a duke, 45

And lorde of high degree,

Did sue to that fayre ladye of love ;

But never shee wolde them nee.

When manye a daye was past and gone,

Ne comforte she colde finde,

The kynge proclaimed a tourneament,

To cheere his daughters mind.

50

And there came lords, and there came knights,

Fro manye a farre countryè,

To break a spere for theyr ladyes love, 55

Before that faire ladyè.

And many a ladye there was sette,

In purple and in palle ;

But faire Christabelle, soe woe-begone,

Was the fayrest of them all. 60

Then manye a knighte was mickle of might,

Before his ladye gaye ;

But a stranger wight, whom no man knewe,

He wan the prize eche daye.

His acton it was all of blacke, 65

His hewberke and his sheelde ;  
Ne noe man wist whence he did come,  
Ne noe man knewe where he did gone,  
When they came out the feelde.

And now three days were prestlye past 70

In feates of chivalrye,  
When lo, upon the fourth morninge,  
A sorrowfulle sight they see :

A hugye giaunt stiffe and starke, 75

All foule of limbe and lere,  
Two goggling eyen like fire farden,  
A mouthe from eare to eare.

Before him came a dwarffe full lowe,

That waited on his knee ;  
And at his backe five heads he bare,  
All wan and pale of blee.

80

“Sir,” quoth the dwarffe, and louted lowe,

“Behold that hend Soldain !  
Behold these heads I beare with me !  
They are kings which he hath slain.

85

“The Eldridge knight is his own cousin,

Whom a knight of thine hath shent :  
And hee is come to avenge his wrong :  
And to thee, all thy knightes among,

Defiance here hath sent.

90

“But yette he will appease his wrath,

Thy daughters love to winne ;  
And, but thou yelde him that fayre mayd,  
Thy halls and towers must brenne.

“Thy head, Syr King, must goe with mee, 95

Or else thy daughter deere ;  
Or else within these lists soe broad,  
Thou must finde him a peere.”

The king he turned him round aboue,  
 And in his hearte was woe : 100  
 “ Is there never a knihte of my round tablè  
 This matter will undergoe ?

‘ Is there never a knihte amongst yee all  
 Will fight for my daughter and mee ?  
 Whoever will fight yon grimme Soldan,  
 Right fair his meede shall bee. 105

“ For hee shall have my broad lay-lands,  
 And of my crowne be heyre ;  
 And he shall winne faire Christabelle  
 To be his wedded fere.” 110

But every knihte of his round tablè  
 Did stand both still and pale ;  
 For, whenever they lookt on the grim Soldan,  
 It made their hearts to quail.

All woe-begone was that fayre ladye,  
 When she sawe no helpe was nye ;  
 She cast her thought on her owne true-love,  
 And the teares gusht from her eye. 115

Up then sterte the stranger knihte,  
 Sayd, “ Ladye, be not affrayd ;  
 He fight for thee with this grimme Soldan,  
 Thoughe he be unmacklye made. 120

“ And if thou wilt lend me the Eldridge sworde,  
 That lyeth within thy bowre,  
 I truste in Christe for to slay this fiende,  
 Thoughe he be stiff in stowre.” 125

“ Goe fetch him downe the Eldridge sworde,”  
 The kinge he cryde, “ with spedde :  
 Nowe heaven assist thee, courteous knihte ;  
 My daughter is thy meede.” 130

The gyaunt he stepped into the lists,  
 And sayd, “ Awaye, awaye :  
 I sweare, as I am the hend Soldan,  
 Thou lettest me here all daye.”

Then forthe the stranger knight he came, 135  
 In his blacke armoure dight :  
 The ladye sighed a gentle sighe,  
 "That this were my true knighte!"

And nowe the gyaunt and knighte be mett  
 Within the lists soe broad ; 140  
 And now, with swordes soe sharpe of steele,  
 They gan to lay on load.

The Soldan strucke the knighte a stroke,  
 That made him reele asyde :  
 Then woe-begone was that fayre ladye, 145  
 And thrice she deeply sighde.

The Soldan strucke a second stroke,  
 And made the bloude to flowe :  
 All pale and wan was that ladye fayre,  
 And thrice she wept for woe. 150

The Soldan strucke a third fell stroke,  
 Which brought the knighte on his knee :  
 Sad sorrow pierced that ladyes heart,  
 And she shriekt loud shriekings three.

The knighte he leapt upon his feete, 155  
 All recklesse of the pain :  
 Quoth hee, "But heaven be now my spedee,  
 Or else I shall be slaine."

He grasped his sworde with mayne and mighte,  
 And spying a secrette part, 160  
 He drove it into the Soldan's syde,  
 And pierced him to the heart.

Then all the people gave a shoute,  
 Whan they sawe the Soldan falle :  
 The ladye wept, and thanked Christ 165  
 That had reskewed her from thrall.

And now the kinge, with all his barons,  
 Rose uppe from offe his seate,  
 And downe he stepped into the listes  
 That curteous knighte to greete. 170

But he, for Payne and lacke of bloude,  
 Was fallen into a swounde,  
 And there, all walteringe in his gore,  
 Lay lifelesse on the grounde.

“Come downe, come downe, my daughter deare,      175  
 Thou art a leeche of skille ;  
 Farre lever had I lose halfe my landes,  
 Than this good knigchte sholde spille.”

Downe then steppeth that fayre ladye,  
 To helpe him if she maye :      180  
 But when she did his beavere raise,  
 “It is my life, my lord,” she sayes,  
 And shrikte and swound awaye.

Syr Cauline juste lifte up his eyes,  
 When he hearde his ladye crye :      185  
 “O ladye, I am thine owne true love ;  
 For thee I wisht to dye.”

Then giving her one partinge looke,  
 He closed his eyes in death  
 Ere Christabelle, that ladye milde,      190  
 Begane to drawe her breathe.

But when she found her comelye knigchte  
 Indeed was dead and gone,  
 She layde her pale, cold cheeke to his,  
 And thus she made her moane :      195

“O staye, my deare and onlye lord,  
 For mee, thy faithfull feere ;  
 ’Tis meet that I shold followe thee,  
 Who hast bought my love so deare.”

Then fayntinge in a deadeye swoune,  
 And with a deep-fette sighe,  
 That burst her gentle heart in twayne,  
 Faire Christabelle did dye.

—*From Percy's "Reliques."*

## 3.—FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

The Frost performs its secret ministry,  
 Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry  
 Came loud—and hark, again ! loud as before.  
 The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,  
 Have left me to that solitude, which suits  
 Abstruser musings : save that at my side  
 My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.  
 'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs  
 And vexes meditation with its strange  
 And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,  
 This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and wood,  
 With all the numberless goings on of life  
 Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame  
 Lies on my low burnt fire, and quivers not ;  
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,  
 Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.  
 Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature  
 Gives its dim sympathies with me who live,  
 Making it a companionable form,  
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit  
 By its own moods interprets, every where  
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,  
 And makes a toy of Thought.

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But O ! how oft.  
 How oft, at school, with most believing mind,  
 Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,  
 To watch that fluttering *stranger* ! and as oft  
 With unclosed lids, already had, I dreamt,  
 Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,  
 Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang  
 From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,  
 So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me  
 With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear  
 Most like articulate sounds of things to come !  
 So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,  
 Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams !  
 And so I brooded all the following morn,  
 Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye

Fixed with mock study on my swimming book :  
 Save if the door half opened, and I snatched  
 A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,  
 For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,  
 Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,  
 My play-mate when we were both clothed alike !

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,  
 Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,  
 Fill up the interspersed vacancies  
 And momentary pauses of the thought !  
 My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart  
 With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,  
 And think that thou shalt learn far other lore  
 And in far other scenes ! For I was reared  
 In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,  
 And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.  
 But *thou*, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze  
 By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
 Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
 Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
 And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear  
 The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
 Of that eternal language, which thy God  
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
 Himself in all, and all things in himself.  
 Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould  
 Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
 Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
 With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
 Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
 Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch  
 Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eve-drops fall  
 Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
 Or if the secret ministry of frost  
 Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
 Quietly shining to the quiet Moon,

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—S. T. Coleridge.

## 4.—DEJECTION : AN ODE.

WRITTEN APRIL 4, 1802.

## I.

Well ! If the Bard was weather-wise who made  
 The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,  
 This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence  
 Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade  
 Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,  
 Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes  
 Upon the strings of this *Æolian* lute,  
 Which better far were mute.

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For lo ! the new Moon winter-bright !  
 And overspread with phantom light,  
 (With swimming phantom light o'erspread  
 But rimmed and circled by a silver thread,) 10  
 I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling  
 The coming on of rain and squally blast.  
 And oh ! that even now the gust were swelling,  
 And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast !  
 Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,  
 And sent my soul abroad,  
 Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,  
 Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live ! 15

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## II.

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,  
 A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,  
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,  
 In word, or sigh, or tear—  
 O Lady ! in this wan and heartless mood,  
 To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,  
 All this long eve, so balmy and serene,  
 Have I been gazing on the western sky,  
 And its peculiar tint of yellow green :  
 And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye !  
 And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,  
 That give away their motion to the stars ;  
 Those stars, that glide behind them or between,  
 Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen : 25

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Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew  
 In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;  
 I see them all so excellently fair,  
 I see, not feel, how beautiful they are !

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## III.

My genial spirits fail ;  
 And what can these avail  
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?  
 It were a vain endeavour,  
 Though I should gaze forever  
 On that green light that lingers in the west :  
 I may not hope from outward forms to win  
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

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## IV.

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,  
 And in our life alone does Nature live :  
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !  
 And would we aught behold, of higher worth,  
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed  
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,  
 Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth,  
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
 Enveloping the Earth—  
 And from the soul itself must there be sent  
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

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## V.

O pure of heart ! thou need'st not ask of me  
 What this strong music in the soul may be !  
 What, and wherein it doth exist,  
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,  
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.  
 Joy, virtuous Lady ! Joy that ne'er was given,  
 Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,  
 Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,  
 Joy, Lady ! is the spirit and the power,  
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,  
 A new Earth and new Heaven,

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Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—  
 Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—  
     We in ourselves rejoice !  
 And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,  
     All melodies the echoes of that voice,  
     All colours a suffusion from that light.

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## VI.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,  
     This joy within me dallied with distress,  
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff  
     Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness :  
 For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,  
     And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.  
 But now afflictions bow me down to earth :  
     Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,  
     But oh ! each visitation  
     Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,  
     My shaping spirit of Imagination.  
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
     But to be still and patient, all I can ;  
 And haply by abstruse research to steal  
     From my own nature all the natural man—  
     This was my sole resource, my only plan :  
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
     And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

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## VII.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,  
     Reality's dark dream !  
 I turn from you, and listen to the wind,  
     Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream  
     Of agony by torture lengthened out  
     That lute sent forth ! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,  
     Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,  
     Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,  
     Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,  
     Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,  
     Mad Lutanist ! who in this month of showers,  
     Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,

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Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,  
 The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.  
 'Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds !  
 Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold !

What tell'st thou now about ?

110

'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,  
 With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds—  
 At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold !  
 But hush ! there is a pause of deepest silence !

And at that noise, as of a rushing crowd,  
 With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—  
 It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud !

A tale of less affright,

And tempered with delight,

As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,

120

'Tis of a little child  
 Upon a lonesome wild,  
 Not far from home, but she hath lost her way :  
 And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,  
 And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear. 125

### VIII.

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep :  
 Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep !  
 Visit her, gentle Sleep ! with wings of healing,  
 And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,  
 May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,

130

Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth !

With light heart may she rise,

Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,

Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice ;  
 To her may all things live, from pole to pole,  
 Their life the eddying of her living soul !

135

O simple spirit, guided from above,  
 Dear Lady ! friend devoutest of my choice,  
 Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

—S. T. Coleridge.

## 5.—SONNET XXIX.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes  
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate ;  
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featured like him, like him with friends possest,  
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,  
 With what I most enjoy contented least ;  
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
 Haply I think on Thee—and then my state,  
 Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate ;  
 For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings  
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

—W. Shakespeare.

## 6.—ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent  
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
 And that one talent which is death to hide,  
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
 To serve therewith my Maker and present  
 My true account, lest He, returning chide ;  
 “ Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? ”  
 I fondly ask ; but patience to prevent  
 That murmur, soon replies, “ God does not need  
 Either man's work, or His own gifts ; who best  
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best ; His state  
 Is kingly ; thousands at His bidding speed,  
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest :  
 They also serve who only stand and wait ? ”

—John Milton.

## 7.—TO THE AUTUMNAL MOON.

Mild Splendour of the various-vested Night !  
 Mother of wildly-working visions ! hail !  
 I watch thy gliding, while with watery light  
 Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil ;  
 And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud      5  
 Behind the gathering blackness lost on high ;  
 And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud  
 Thy placid lightning o'er the awakened sky.  
 Ah such is Hope ! as changeful and as fair !  
 Now dimly peering on the wistful sight ;      10  
 Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair :  
 But soon emerging in her radiant might  
 She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care  
 Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

—S. T. Coleridge.

## 8.—LA FAYETTE

As when far off the warbled strains are heard  
 That soar on Morning's wing the vales among ;  
 Within his cage the imprisoned matin bird  
 Swells the full chorus with a generous song :  
 He bathes no pinion in the dewy light,      5  
 No Father's joy, no Lover's bliss he shares,  
 Yet still the rising radiance cheers his sight—  
 His fellows' freedom sooths the captives cares !  
 Thou, FAYETTE ! who didst wake with startling voice  
 Life's better sun from that long wintry night,      10  
 Thus in thy Country's triumph shall rejoice  
 And mock with raptures high the dungeon's might.  
 For lo ! the morning struggles into day,  
 And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray !

—S. T. Coleridge.

## 9.—ON THE CASTLE OF CHILLON.

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind !

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,  
For there thy habitation is the heart—  
The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;  
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—  
To fetters and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,  
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.  
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,  
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,  
Until his very steps have left a trace  
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,  
By Bonnivard ! May none those marks efface !  
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

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—*Byron.*

## 10.—A SONNET OF CAMOËNS.

Meek spirit, who so early didst depart,  
Thou art at rest in Heaven ! I linger here,  
And feed the lonely anguish of my heart ;  
Thinking of all that made existence dear.  
All lost ! If in the happy world above  
Remembrance of this mortal life endure,  
Thou wilt not then forget the perfect love  
Which still thou seest in me.—O spirit pure !  
And if the irremediable grief,  
The woe, which never hopes on earth relief,  
May merit ought of thee ; prefer thy prayer  
To God, who took thee early to his rest,  
That it may please him soon amid the blest  
To summon me, dear maid ! to meet thee there.

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—*Translated by Southey.*

Notes on Poetry - 1000

Coefficients of poetic expressiveness  
Rhythm, Metre, Stanza, Rhyme  
Assonance, Alliteration, Melody  
Harmony. - all due when  
vital & organic to unifying  
action of feeling or emotion

Foot-verse - stanza each represents  
a unity in itself merging in the  
complete unity of the successive  
steps.

Each unity has its fusing or combining principle <sup>no 3</sup> -

Foot - accent. - each foot  
contains one accented syllable

- ① x a.
- ② a x.
- ③ x x a.
- ④ a x x.
- ⑤ x a x.

Variations in Metre. - i.e. changing  
& substituting foot suffering from  
the same metre - note attitude  
of ~~XVIII~~ Cent. towards this (Dr  
Johnson's Essay on Metre of mult.  
beloved variations proposed

